ACPL ITEM
DISCARDED

COUNTY DEPARTMENT
PUBLIC LIBRARY
FORT WAYNE & ALLEN CO., IND.

j970.1 Sch8o
C123709

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

of

Fort Wayne and Allen County, Ind.

Information For Country Borrowers

Books are free to all residents of Allen County. They may be borrowed from the Main Library at Fort Wayne or from any Branch, Reading Room, Deposit Station or School Library in Allen County.

Books will be sent by parcel post, prepaid to any borrower living a distance from a Library Station.

COUNTY DEPARTMENT
ANTHONY 3333

LIBRARY BUREAU CAT. NO. 1165

Sch8o
C123709

ACPL ITEM
DISCARDED

On the Warpath

(p. 20)

PITAMAKAN RELATED THE KILLING OF A SIOUX

ON THE WARPATH

BY

JAMES WILLARD SCHULTZ
(AP-I-KUN-I)

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
GEORGE VARIAN

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge

COPYRIGHT, 1914, BY THE PERRY MASON COMPANY
COPYRIGHT, 1914, BY JAMES WILLARD SCHULTZ

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Published September 1914

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

Illustrations

PITAMAKAN RELATED THE KILLING OF A SIOUX *Frontispiece*

SITTING MOTIONLESS NEAR THE BODY

BEGAN TO QUIRT HIM UNMERCIFULLY

WE CAME TOGETHER WITH A SHOCK

C183709
CO. SCHOOLS

ON THE WARPATH

CHAPTER I

ABOUT a week after Pitamakan, José, and I arrived in Fort Benton from our long journey into Apache Land, the Blackfeet packed up and trailed northward. They were to hunt buffalo on the plains of the Marias in order to get hides to tan into leather for new lodge-skins; and then they were to move up to the foot of the Rockies for new lodge-poles. During the week they had traded fine buffalo robes, and their winter catch of various furs, for about all the freight of the steamboat that had brought us up from St. Louis. Pitamakan, of course, went with his people, and he had not been gone twenty-four hours before the "blues" had a solid grip on me. I sorely missed him. The spring trade was over and there was not a thing for me to do in the Fort: loafing is the hardest kind of work!

"Our son is uneasy; his heart is away down," said Tsistsaki to my uncle one evening, as we sat before a small blaze in the fireplace of our quarters.

"I have noticed it," he replied. "He has n't enough to do. We will appoint him post hunter."

"But that would be to take old man Revois's job away from him," I objected.

"Never mind about that. The old fellow is also uneasy, as your aunt says. I 'll send him out beaver trapping for a time."

So it came to pass that in the morning I went out to make a killing of meat for the fifty or more inmates of the Fort. Two men followed me with two-wheel Red River carts, the huge wooden wheels tired with buffalo rawhide, the wooden axles groaning and squeaking with a noise that could be heard a mile away. We were back at the Fort long before night, the carts piled high with all the buffalo and antelope meat that each straining carthorse could pull. But I took no joy or pride in my success; the day had long passed when

the hunting and killing of big game gave me pleasure.

On an average I hunted every third day; it was astonishing the amount of meat the employees and their Indian families consumed, although, of course, with the exception of wild berries and *pommes blanches*, — an edible root found everywhere on the prairie in the spring, — meat was practically their only food. The day had not yet come when flour, bacon, beans, and sugar could be purchased in Fort Benton.

I had been post hunter about a month, and the monotonous slaughtering of buffalo and antelope was becoming daily more irksome to me, when, one evening as we were eating supper, who should come in with a "How! How!" of cheery greeting but Pitamakan himself.

"How! How!" we answered, and Tsistsaki jumped from her seat and embraced and kissed him. She was his aunt as well as mine, you will remember.

"Sit down and eat with us, my son," Uncle Wesley genially commanded, and Tsistsaki

hurried to get another plate of pemmican, and some more well-browned roast buffalo ribs from the fireplace. As he took his place beside me I gripped his hand, but said nothing. We understood each other without the use of words.

"I am so glad you have come, nephew," said Tsistsaki. "Now tell us all the news while you eat."

"My father and mother send you all kinds of greetings," he answered. "As to news, there is little. The hunters have killed many buffalo, and the women mostly have already enough leather for new lodges. We move camp to the mountains for new lodge-poles soon, and from there will trail down on to the Two Medicine to hold the Medicine Lodge ceremony. Day before yesterday a war party of thirteen Assiniboines was discovered sneaking toward our horse herds; we killed them all."

"That is news; good news," Tsistsaki exclaimed. "Oh, would that I could have been there to join the scalp dance!"

"How about the hunters — are they getting

many beavers?" Uncle Wesley asked. Our talk was in Blackfoot. My uncle and I never used English when with those who did not understand it, and neither Tsistsaki nor Pitamakan knew a word of the language.

"There are perhaps five or six hundred skins in the camp, and when we go to the mountains a great many of the woodcutters will be caught," Pitamakan said. The answer pleased my uncle; there would be a good fall trade at the Fort.

I could plainly see that Pitamakan had something important on his mind; that he had not come to us merely for a visit; and when we all rose from the table and moved toward the fireplace, I whispered to him: "What you have to say, say it quickly; you make me uneasy, waiting to hear what it is."

He waited until my uncle had filled and lighted his pipe and then said to him: "Sleeping Thunder, chief of whites, have pity on me!"

"Ah, I listen," Uncle Wesley answered.

"It is this. We are soon to build the lodge

for the sun; the great Medicine Lodge. As you know, at that time all the warriors will count their *coups*. I, too, want to count mine, for I have killed many enemies; but I have no witnesses. Again I say have pity, and allow Ahta-to-yi and José the Spaniard to be with me, that I may prove by them that all I say is truth."

"That's it, is it? After two of my best employees. Who would kill the meat — and who finish that new adobe stable, should I let them go? And, once gone, do you think I would set eyes on my boy, here, for a year or so? I would n't. I'd soon be hearing that you and he were off again to the Pacific; or to the Far South; or perhaps to the muskegs of the Far North."

"No, you would n't, uncle," I put in. "Just let me do as he asks, and I promise that I will not go outside of the Blackfeet country."

"Oh, let them go," Tsistsaki exclaimed. "And I — oh, my man — chief of my heart, let me go with them. It is three years, you know, since I have attended the Medicine

Lodge, and I do want to pray and sacrifice to the sun."

Uncle Wesley dropped his pipe, bowed his head, and raised his hands, palms outward. "Enough said," he cried, letting his hands fall heavily on his knees. "Go. Go, all of you. I might have refused, I would have refused, had it not been for you, Tsistsaki. Woman mine, well you know that I can refuse you nothing."

At that Tsistsaki sprang over on his lap, put her arms round his neck, and told him that he was the best, the kindest man that ever lived.

Pitamakan went back to camp the next morning, and a week later Tsistsaki and I, with a dozen or more Blackfeet who had come in to trade, started for the Medicine Rock bottom of the Two Medicine River, where the great annual religious festival was this year to be held. We arrived there on the same day that the tribe came down from its lodge-pole cutting expedition to the mountains and found there also the whole Kai-nah,—or Blood tribe,

—another branch of the Blackfeet Confederacy. They, and the Blackfeet proper, and the Pi-kun-i, or Piegans, were one and the same people, divided into three tribes. The Blackfeet lived mostly on the North Saskatchewan and Red Deer rivers, and the Bloods on the Old Man's, the St. Mary's, and South Saskatchewan rivers, in what is now the Province of Alberta, Canada. The Piegans wandered north and south from the northern tributaries of the Missouri to the Yellowstone River. However, the two northern tribes also frequently wintered on the Missouri tributaries, and even between it and the Yellowstone, much to the disgust of the Hudson's Bay Company, which thereby lost to the American Fur Company a whole winter's take of robes and furs of the two tribes, amounting to three or four hundred thousand dollars.

It was a grand sight that met our eyes as we looked down into the big Medicine Rock bottom that evening. About fifteen hundred brand-new, snow-white lodges formed a great circle round a smooth, grassy part of the bottom, in the

center of which the sacred lodge was to be erected. The Blood tribe formed the northern, the Piegan the south side of the circle, and the lodges of each band of each tribe were closely grouped round the lodge of its own chief. The Piegan tribe was divided into twenty-four bands, of which the principal ones were the Kut'-ai-im-iks, Never Laugh; the I-nuk'-siks, Small Robes; the Ni-taw'-yiks, Lone Eaters, and the Ni-tait'-skiks, Lone Fighters. At this time Big Lake, chief of the Never Laugh band, was also head chief of the tribe. White Wolf, Pitamakan's father, was chief of the Small Robes.

Arrived at the foot of the hill running from the high prairie into the bottom, Tsistsaki and I wended our way through vast numbers of picketed and loose horses, and through a maze of thickly clustering lodges where playing children, and men and women hurrying on various errands, or to feasts, were as thick as bees round a hive. Well we knew that the band of the head chief was in the center of the half-circle formed by the Piegan tribe, and that

the Small Robe band was located next to it on the east. So we had no difficulty in finding it, and the lodge of White Wolf, recognizable from afar as the largest of the group. It was made of twenty-six fine large cow buffalo skins tanned into soft, white leather.

Actually, we were received at the lodge with open arms. The women, Tsistsaki's relatives, rushed out and embraced and kissed her, and Pitamakan gave me a grizzly bear hug before ordering me inside; he said that he would take care of our horses and saddles. White Wolf, of course, did not come out to greet us, as that would have been a sad breach of Blackfeet etiquette. But he gave us a hearty welcome in words the moment we passed within the doorway, and bade me sit beside him on his left, the place for exceptionally honored guests.

The women of the lodge at once began preparing a meal for us. On Pitamakan's entrance we all talked at once, asking each other the news. We had little to give, except that three more steamboats had arrived at the Fort with goods for the coming winter trade, and that three

and perhaps four more boats were due to arrive during the high water.

"That is, indeed, good news," said White Wolf. "There will be a plenty of trade stuff for us all. If you will visit Eagle Ribs, the Blood chief, and tell him that, I think you can induce him to hunt in the Missouri River country this coming winter, and trade at your post."

I made up my mind that if a vivid description of rainbow-colored prints, fine blankets, arms, and tobacco would do any good, we would have that Blood trade the coming season. And I may as well say right here that I got it.

While we ate our evening meal of meat, soup, and fresh service-berries, the women did most of the talking. They informed Tsistsaki, among other things, that seven Piegan women and five Blood women were together to offer the great lodge to be built, to the sun. The Bloods had brought from the North seven hundred dried buffalo tongues, and the Piegan women had nearly a thousand, all well cured, so there would be enough of the sacred meat for every one in

the great gathering. The important part which these tongues played in the lodge will be later described.

For two moons and more the hunters had been turning over to certain medicine women what buffalo tongues they got, and the women, with the assistance of a number of medicine men, or priests of the sun, had, after many prayers, reverently cut them open for drying. The whole party together sang one hundred sacred songs while preparing each batch of forty or fifty, or whatever number the day's hunt may have furnished.

There was much visiting in the big camp that night. White Wolf had many Blood friends, and singly, and by twos and threes and more, they all came to chat and smoke with him. Many of them were still there when the Big Dipper pointed to midnight. So Pitamakan and I took a couple of buffalo robes and blankets, and were soon asleep just outside the lodge.

Early the next morning preparations for the festival were begun by the building of two large

sweat lodges in the center of the big circle. Facing the east, one was placed behind the other, and the framework of willows was put up, a stick at a time, one warrior after another furnishing a single stick, and each man counting a *coup*, that is, relating an especially brave deed that he had done, as he stuck the butt end of the piece in the ground. The framework of these lodges was covered with old lodge-skins; on top of each was placed a buffalo bull skull, painted one half black and one half red, the symbols for the sun, ruler of the world, and the moon, his wife. When these were completed, and the women had heated some stones, a number of the most prominent warriors went inside the lodges with several medicine men and the hot stones were rolled in after them. These the medicine men sprinkled with water, and as steam arose they prayed for the success of the Medicine Lodge, and for the health, prosperity, and long life of all the people.

On the next day, right in line with these lodges, but about two hundred feet due west

of them, two more sweat lodges were built, making four in all, the sacred number of the Blackfeet, as six is that of the Hopi tribe of Arizona. In these two lodges more prayers were offered as the steam rose, and then everything was in readiness for the building of the big, sacred lodge for the sun. It was on this day that José Perez arrived with his family and every other woman of the Fort.

"There are some unhappy men down here," he said to me. "They don't like to cook their meals; they have been waited upon so long by their women that they have forgotten how to do anything except to eat, and then lie down and smoke!"

During the two days of the prayers in the four medicine sweat lodges, the young men had cut the material for the construction of the big sacred lodge, and now, early in the morning, women began dragging it with their *travois* horses to the space between the sweat lodges. The young men accompanied them, sang war songs and shot at the posts and roof-poles.

Many hands made quick work of building

the lodge. The twenty-foot crotched center post was first put up, then the seven-foot wall posts encircling it. A rail was laid from one to another of these, and then the roof-poles were run from the rails to the top of the center post, and covered with brush, and the lodge was complete, except a small room of tightly woven brush, built later in the west, or rear part of the lodge for the medicine man who was to be chief of the ceremonies.

Here he was to live for four days, neither eating nor drinking. It was his duty to paint black the faces of the people as they came to him two by two, and pray to the sun for their long life and happiness. He was also supposed to make good weather. If heavy clouds appeared, he would rush from his retreat, blowing an eagle wing-bone whistle, and command Rainmaker to take away his threatening clouds.

In fulfillment of their vows to the sun, the seven Piegan and five Blood women now took up their residence in the big lodge, there to remain and fast for the four days of the cere-

mony. For one reason and another, such as the sickness of a relative or the absence of a loved one on the war trail, each of them had, during the year, promised the sun that if it would make the sick person well, or help the warrior to return safely, she would build a great lodge in its honor. None but women of pure life dared make this vow.

The great piles of dried buffalo tongues had been brought into the lodge, and the medicine women soon cut them into very small pieces for distribution. The people now began to enter the place, singly, by twos and threes, and in little groups, mothers with their children, four or five young men together, members of one of the bands of the All Friends Society. If they wished it, they were painted with black by the head medicine man, and then each one was given a morsel of the sacred tongue. Upon receiving it, the person held it up toward the sky for a moment, praying the sun, Old Man, and Ground Person — mother earth — for long and happy life. A part of the morsel was then eaten, and the remnant was deposited in the

ground with the words, "This sacred tongue I give to you to eat, Great Mother."

Those who came to partake of the sacred tongue brought presents for the sun, and soon the top of the center post of the lodge, and the roof, were bright with gayly colored and embroidered articles of dress; beautiful war bonnets; plumed shields; beaded moccasins; fine robes and blankets, and even weapons. Nothing was too good to sacrifice to the all-powerful god, giver of life and maker of light and heat.

"Come, let us all go and make sacrifice; let us go early," said Tsistsaki that first morning of the four days. "You, too, Ah-ta-to-yi. You have much for which to thank the sun."

So I entered the sacred lodge with her, and White Wolf and his family. Side by side Pitamakan and I had our faces painted, and together we prayed and partook of the sacred tongue, and made sacrifice to the sun. Pitamakan offered the scalp of one of the Navajos he had killed; I gave a beaded buckskin shirt that I had outgrown. As I tied it to a roof-pole there was a general murmur of approbation

from the assembled crowd: "He is one of us." "A true Piegan." "He gives generously to the Above One."

Meanwhile, on this and the succeeding three days of the ceremony, the Piegan warriors were counting their *coups* south of the lodge; and to the north of it the Bloods told off their battle records, some of the warriors, with the assistance of friends, enacting the scenes that they described. It was all very interesting.

Inside the lodge, other warriors were enduring terrific pain in fulfillment of vows under no condition to be broken. Some had been ill; others had been so sorely pressed by the enemy that there had seemed no way of escape; and in their hour of distress they had promised the sun that they would swing in his honor at the next Medicine Lodge, if he would but save them. The chief medicine man had been called upon to cut slits in the skin of their breasts, and insert wooden skewers attached to ropes fastened to the top of the center post. By these they were suspended from the ground, swinging, surging, some even shrieking with

pain, until the skin broke and gave them merciful release from the torture.

Pitamakan chose the last day of the festival for the counting of his *coups*. With a dozen friends to aid him he had been secretly practicing the dramatic recital, and word had gone forth that thrilling scenes were to be enacted. When he appeared upon the ground with his helpers an immense crowd awaited him, all the Piegan tribe and most of the Bloods, all standing in a closely packed circle round a space about a hundred yards in diameter.

Into this came Pitamakan with his friends on horseback. All dismounted; advancing alone to the center of the open ground, he began to talk, turning frequently that all might see and hear him.

"I have witnesses here to prove all that I am about to relate," he said. "There they stand, Ah-ta-to-yi, my partner, and the Spai-ye-kwan. None may doubt their word."

"Ai! They are truthful." "Their tongues are straight." "Neither is your tongue crooked," came from here and there in the crowd.

Pitamakan then in a loud voice related the killing of a Sioux, his first *coup*, and at the close four drummers whanged a big drum, and a shout of approbation went up from the people. At that he became more enthusiastic in speech and manner, and went on to relate, one after another, his encounters with the warriors of various tribes, beginning with those we met during our winter in the Rockies. From that he passed to the story of our "Quest of the Fish-Dog Skin," describing, and with the assistance of his friends enacting, the manner in which he had killed each particular enemy.

The acting was good, and the spectators became more and more enthusiastic, the drummers whanged more loudly, as he took up the tale of our journey into the Far South, the Always-Summer Land, the land of the Apache. It was not a bald tale, a bald enactment of our encounters with the Sioux, Crows, Navajos, and Apaches. He managed to weave in vivid descriptions of the strange Southland, and of the still more strange peoples, the Hopi and the Pimas, who had befriended us. And when, at

last, he closed with the description of the killing of the Apaches at the Casa Grande ruins, and said, "There. I have finished," a mighty shout went up from the circle, and the drum boomed louder than ever. On all sides I heard: "Although a boy, he has already done more than many of our warriors." "Not yet a man, but he has killed seventeen enemies. I counted them." "He is brave, he is wise. Some day he will be the head chief of our people."

"Is the young man generous?" I heard a Blood ask a Piegan friend.

"*Ai!* Both generous and rich," came the answer. "Many a horse, many a hide, and much meat has he given to the poor widows and fatherless."

It was, indeed, a triumph for Pitamakan, that well-told, well-enacted story of his wanderings and his battles. His mother and Tsistsaki wept for joy, and old White Wolf held himself very proudly, fairly spurning the ground, as we escorted the young warrior to our lodge.

At sundown that evening the ceremonies of the Medicine Lodge came to a close, and every-

where there was great feasting, much singing and dancing, women dances, war dances, and dances stately and grim by the medicine men. All felt that the meeting had been a great success, and that the sun was pleased with his children, and with the handsome presents that had been hung up for him in the great lodge.

After we had finished the evening meal, Pitamakan was called to feast with some friends in the Blood camp. Sometime after he answered the summons I became restless. The night was very warm. The small blaze in the fireplace made the lodge oppressive; I stood the heat and the chatter of the women as long as I could, and then went out for a stroll about camp, wrapping a blanket round me Indian fashion so that I would not be set upon by the huge wolf-like and savage dogs guarding every lodge.

Turning to the right, I wandered through a part of the Piegan camp, then through the half-circle of the Blood camp, and round into that part of the Piegan camp to the left of Big Lake's lodge. There, skirting the lodges on the outer edge of the circle, I was passing one

that was small and dimly lighted, when I heard some one mention Pitamakan's name, and at that I stopped to listen.

"Yes, of course he lied," the speaker was saying. "He never killed any seventeen enemies. I doubt if he has killed two, even. And that white boy, that friend of his, Ah-ta-to-yi, and José, the Spaniard, who were his witnesses! Of course they lied, too. He paid them a good many horses for what they did for him."

"Oh, I don't know about that," some one else spoke up. "Maybe it was all truth."

"It was n't," the first speaker declared. "And even if he did speak truth, I don't care. Pitamakan shall never become chief of the Small Robe band. I want that place myself, and you have got to help me get it. I must have it; I will have it, even if we have to put this proud bragger out of the way. Now, will you help me?"

After a moment I heard a low, answering "Yes."

"Then let 's take a smoke to bind the bargain."

At that I ventured to crawl to the doorway of the lodge. Carefully I drew aside the curtain until I could see within. As I had thought, the one who had spoken so bitterly against us was Long Bear, a young man who had always spoken ill of my friend, and shown hostility toward him at every opportunity. The other, the one who had promised to aid Long Bear in his underhand schemes, was a poor youth named One Horn. So far as I knew, he had not a horse to ride; he depended upon others for a mount when camp was moved.

CHAPTER II

BACKING away as cautiously as I approached, I got upon my feet and returned to White Wolf's lodge. The conversation I had heard disturbed me, for Long Bear had a bad reputation. His was a sly, quarrelsome disposition, but no one doubted his bravery. He had made a number of successful raids against the enemy, and on this day had counted seven *coups* at the Medicine Lodge, all proved by witnesses. But no one liked him; he had no friends among the young men of the camp, and the young women feared him.

Every one was asleep when I entered the lodge, so I lay down on my couch. A few moments afterward Pitamakan returned from the Blood camp. I told him about the conversation I had heard, and he laughed softly.

"Long Bear has hated me ever since we were little children," he said. "We were shooting at a mark with bow and arrows one day,

and I beat him at it. He got so angry that he struck me a hard blow on the head with his bow; then I jumped upon him, threw him down, snatched the bow out of his hands and broke it. Since that time his eyes shine like fire whenever he sees me, and there is fire in his heart. But of course I do not fear him. What can he do to me? Nothing. And as for that One Horn, why, truly he is a nothing person."

"You must watch out for Long Bear; he is dangerous; he will stop at nothing to harm you," I insisted.

For reply Pitamakan merely gave a low and happy laugh, and turned over and went to sleep.

The next morning the Bloods started for Fort Benton, to trade what beaver and other pelts and robes they had. Chief Eagle Ribs again assured me that he would winter in our country, probably on Arrow Creek, and on the Yellow, or, as we call it, the Judith River. José Perez, Tsistsaki, and all the other women of the Fort went with them. I sent word to my uncle by Tsistsaki that Pitamakan and I had concluded to brand our horses, and that

I would return as soon as the work was accomplished.

The Piegan chiefs had a council, and decided to move to the Little, or, as we call it, the Milk River, from there to the junction of Belly and Many Dead Chiefs (St. Mary's) Rivers, thence to the Sweet-Grass Hills, and from there to Fort Benton, where the hunters would outfit for the coming winter.

Two evenings later we trailed into the valley of the North Fork of Little River, the hunters having killed all the buffalo and antelope we could use. There were many beavers along the stream, and while they were being trapped Pitamakan and I determined to do our branding. The two hundred horses that the old medicine man had given us for the "Fish-Dog Skin," were now increased by natural breeding to a band of more than three hundred head: so many that Pitamakan and I could not tell whether some of them were, or were not, our own. No one knew them all except a young and fatherless boy named Short Bow, who herded them for us. We thought it time to

have them all well marked with the iron in case anything should happen to him.

Promising them a horse each for helping us, we had no difficulty in getting together a dozen young men, all good ropers, and in one day we put up a serviceable corral; a cut cliff formed one side of it. Into this we drove a few horses and mares and colts at a time, threw them, and with an old wagon-end gate-rod that some one lent us, burned a large "X" on the left hip of each animal. Many of the horses, some of them six and seven years old, had never even been roped, and the way they fought, biting and kicking and rearing up before finally toppling over, was something to be remembered. Three long days were required to brand them all, and after paying our helpers we found that we had, young and old, three hundred and seventy-one head.

"What shall we ever do with them all?" I asked Pitamakan the evening the branding was finished. "We can't sell them, and they number more than we could use up in a whole lifetime."

"Why, of course we can sell them," he answered. "Many a man in this, and the Blood, and the Gros Ventre camp would pay four or five beaver skins for a good horse. But what is the use of selling? We have everything we want; and let me tell you that when I see that big herd all bunched up, and making thunder with their hoofs as they rush along with heads up, and flying manes and tails, my heart swells big with pride. Few of the richest men of the tribe own more horses than we have, and we are only boys. I want us to have a thousand head; and we will have them if we just take good care of the breeders now in the herd."

There spoke the true Blackfoot. Pitamakan took as much pride and joy in his horses as any Bedouin or Arab that ever lived. As for myself, I would have given them all away rather than be bothered with looking after the band. I liked a good horse well enough, but two or three easy-paced, swift buffalo runners were quite sufficient for my needs.

We remained at the North Fork ten days o. more, long enough to trap out nearly all the

beavers living along it. Then we trailed over the big ridge dividing the Arctic waters from those of the Mexican Gulf, and made camp not far below the junction of the Belly and St. Mary's — on the South Saskatchewan, in fact. Because of the contour of the plain overlooking the river, it was impossible for the different bands of the tribe to set up their lodges in the customary order of encampment. The ground was cut here and there by deep *coulées*, and close to the bluff overlooking the wide, swift stream, there was a low, level, and fairly wide depression, a little valley, running almost parallel with, and finally into, the river valley.

The lodges of most of the bands were set up in this depression. The Small Robes and the Long Eaters, coming along at the tail end of the big caravan, found the whole of this low, grassy camp-ground occupied by the other bands. So, crossing it, they put up their lodges on a level tongue of land that on the north broke off sharply into the river, a hundred feet below. We arrived at this place about three o'clock in the afternoon; before sundown the

men who had scattered out during the day to hunt were all in camp with their loads of buffalo meat.

Tired by the long day's ride, and the work of taking down the lodges and putting them up again, the people went early to sleep that night. Pitamakan and I, however, felt very much awake, and when the others in our lodge turned in, we went to the edge of the bluff above the camp, and seating ourselves comfortably, looked out over the moonlit country, and down at the shimmering, swirling waters of the river.

"Listen to it," he said to me, breaking a long silence. "Do you hear it whispering down by yonder bar, and moaning in deep tones up by the bend, and laughing unevenly under us at the edge of the bluff? Well, I often think that rivers, as well as men and animals and birds, have a language of their own. Often and often I have sat and listened to them, to their many and ever-changing sounds, and tried to understand, but I think that man can never learn their talk. The beaver, now, and the

otter — I am sure they understand what the rivers and the little streamlets say. And the dread Under-Water People: they also must know. Perhaps, after all, it is they who make the strange noises we hear below. More than likely some of them are living right now in that deep, dark whirl just under us."

"You may be right. You may be right," I said, humoring his fancies. "Whatever the cause of it may be, whether sand bars and rocks, down-dropping channel, or People of the Depths, I love to hear it."

"I tell you, brother, that a river, any kind of a stream, is a living thing," Pitamakan reiterated; and then again for a long time we sat silent and motionless, each busy with his own thoughts and speculations.

We were a half-mile or more above camp, and still beyond us a number of horses were grazing; *travois* and pack-horses, unbroken animals, and mares and colts. As always, the best horses, swift buffalo runners and very valuable, were picketed for the night close to the lodges of their owners. Suddenly some of the

wild animals in this grazing band began to snort, then to run back from the bluffs, the more gentle ones also taking alarm and following them.

"What can have frightened them? Wolves?" I asked.

Pitamakan was already lying flat on the ground trying to get a view of the disturbers against the sky-line; I followed his example. The horses stopped after running a couple of hundred yards, then turned and gazed toward the west, some of the wilder ones continuing to snort; then in a moment or two they broke away again, and went streaming past us, running and trotting.

"*Mut-tup-i! So-ob-iks!*" (People! A war party!), Pitamakan whispered, and at that moment I caught a glimpse of some shadowy, dim forms that were unmistakably men. There seemed a great number of them; an army, almost. They were advancing very slowly.

Now, while we could just make them out against the moonlit sky, it was plainly impossible for them to see us at that distance, for we were downhill from them, and the dark

coulées beyond were our background. So up we sprang and ran for camp, and arriving there awoke White Wolf and secured our weapons. He said that he would quietly rouse the men of his own band and the Lone Eaters, and ordered us to hurry down to the lodges of the other bands and give the alarm. This we did; the men we awakened hurried out to assist us in spreading the news of the approach of the big war party, and cautioned mothers to keep their children quiet.

Big Lake was one of the first we roused, and when, in a few words, we told what we had seen, he took instant command of the situation. He ordered the chiefs of the Lone Fighters, Black Doors, and Seldom Lonesome bands, to go with their men to the assistance of White Wolf, and himself led the warriors of his own and other bands up the low draw to hem in the war party against the bluff.

"Tell your father not to fire at the enemy until obliged to do so," he said to Pitamakan. "We want all the time possible to get in behind them."

We hurried back to the top of the narrow ridge and delivered the message, but White Wolf had already issued the same order. More than two hundred men were lying flat on the ground just west of the Small Robes lodges, grimly awaiting the coming of the enemy. Pitamakan and I, rifles in hand and six-shooters stuck loosely in our belts, lay down on either side of White Wolf. A big, slow-drifting cloudbank had obscured the moon, and the night was now very dark. Time dragged; we could see nothing, hear nothing. Evidently the war party was waiting for the moon to clear, before attacking what they believed was a sleeping camp.

SCHOOLS

Fifteen or twenty minutes passed, a time of suspense to me, at least, before the cloudbank drifted on, and the moon again shone down upon us and revealed a big body of men silently, slowly, step by step sneaking toward us and our camp. They were spread out in a line fifty or seventy-five yards long, and five or six men deep. Leading them was a man of giant stature, who wore a peculiar headdress of feathers

radiating in all directions like the quill armor of an angry porcupine.

"Assinawa!" (Crees), White Wolf whispered.

The party had been feeling its way along the ridge during the time the moon had been hidden, and was now not more than seventy-five yards from us. And now, as the leader turned and with upraised hand silently halted his men, White Wolf suddenly shouted, "*Is-skö-nuk-it!*" (shoot).

At that our two hundred and more guns spit fire and cracked and boomed, and in answer to the startled yells and shrieks of pain of the enemy we raised the Blackfoot battle-cry and hastily reloaded our weapons in a pall of dense, low-hanging powder smoke. The enemy fired back at us, but we were all lying low and their bullets sped high above the ground. Up we sprang then and cleared the smoke, and saw many motionless, or writhing on the grass, the rest in full retreat.

Then on their left, and in front of them, Big Lake's men began firing into their close-

packed ranks. The fugitives answered with but a few, scattering shots. Their retreat cut off in those directions — to the west and toward the plains — back they come toward us, only to be met with a devastating fusillade. I saw their giant leader, still apparently unharmed, raise his hands as he shouted something to his panic-stricken men, and at that moment Pitamakan called to me, "Now see him drop," and fired. The giant whirled about and fell flat, and at that his surviving men made a rush for the almost perpendicular bluff and went, some rolling and sliding, and some with running jumps, down, down into the deep, dark, swirling water of the river a hundred feet below.

"I killed him! I count *coup* on the chief," shouted Long Bear. He rushed forward and seized the dead man's gun.

"You did not kill him! He is not your *coup!*" cried Arrow Top Knot, one of our close friends. "Pitamakan killed this chief. I saw him do it."

And at that he snatched the gun out of Long Bear's hand.

Pitamakan and I, hurrying toward the bluff with a crowd of our party, did not stop to see the outcome of this. We found the shimmering, silvery water all broken by the wake of dark swimming forms, at which the whole Piegan force was gazing, while Big Lake and White Wolf ran up and down the long line shouting, 'Shoot no more! Let some of them survive to carry home the tale of what we Pikun-i do to our enemies."

Indeed, only one or two more shots were fired, by young men beside themselves with excitement and lust for killing. We watched the Crees battling for life in the treacherous waters of the wide river. Some of them, many of them, swam slower and slower, and then, often with a last, despairing cry, sank out of sight. Others, gaining the far shore, ran feebly or reeled across the sands into the shelter of a fringe of timber. Still others had undoubtedly been killed by the jump into the water from the bluff on which we stood. When no more of the enemy were to be seen in the river, White Wolf, Pitamakan, and I went home,

leaving the counting of the dead to those more interested in the result of the fight.

We talked but little, and after answering some of the questions of the frightened women, lay down for a well-earned rest.

In the morning the camp was early astir with excitement and enthusiasm. The camp-crier was making the rounds of the lodges shouting that three hundred and eleven Crees had fallen before the sure aim of the Piegan warriors, and that many more had been seized by the Under-Water People. Here and there seasoned warriors and younger men were loudly counting their *coups*.

Long Bear came and stood just beyond the doorway of our lodge, shouting, "I — I, the Long Bear, count the greatest *coup* of all. It was I who killed the leader, the giant chief of the Crees."

Pitamakan looked at me and smiled.

Three times Long Bear shouted this, and then we heard Arrow Top Knot dispute his word. "What you say is untruth, and you know it," he said.

And then three or four others cried out, "Of course he lies. When was he ever known to speak the truth?"

"Pitamakan, you surely have many friends," I whispered.

"I do not lie. I killed the big leader," Long Bear angrily shouted.

"Is it so?" Arrow Top Knot asked. "Well, come with me and I will prove to you that you did no such thing."

"I don't have to go with you," Long Bear answered. "I know what I did; I tell you that I killed that chief. One Horn, here, is my witness that I did."

"*Ai*, it is the truth. Long Bear killed him," said that person.

"Ha! You dare not go with us to view that fallen chief," Arrow Top Knot tauntingly exclaimed. "Well, come, friends, let us go and seek the bullet that laid him low."

They went away and a moment later I stepped out of the lodge. Long Bear and One Horn were following them at a little distance, and I trailed slowly after the pair. "It might

be," I thought, "that both Pitamakan and his rival had put a bullet into the Cree." We all gathered presently beside the dead chief, and Arrow Top Knot examined the body. There was but one bullet-hole in it, a small hole fair in the center of the back. He turned the body over and exposed a similar hole in the breast; and then, with an exclamation of surprise and pleasure, he stooped again and took up from the inside of the Cree's heavy blanket capote a small and somewhat battered ball, of a size running thirty-two to the pound.

As every one knew, Pitamakan and I alone of all the camp carried rifles that were of that caliber. Hawkins rifles they were, long-barreled but light, and wonderfully accurate and effective.

"There! Is that not proof enough that Pitamakan killed this enemy?" Arrow Top Knot asked, offering the bullet to Long Bear. The latter refused to take it, and the former pointed at the gun Long Bear carried, an ordinary smooth-bore shooting ounce balls. "We all know what a big hole is made by a ball from

that kind of a gun," he said. "Long Bear, what have you now to say?"

Long Bear had nothing to say. With a wicked scowl at us all, he turned away, One Horn shambling after him, and disappeared among the lodges.

"Beware of Long Bear," I said to Pitamakan a little later. "He now hates you more than ever, for your friends proved to him that it was your bullet that killed the Cree. They found it."

He laughed, and made no reply.

A large amount of plunder — weapons, powder and ball, fine war clothes, and huge Hudson Bay Company knives — was taken from the fallen Crees. Then down came the lodges, the horses were packed, and we turned our backs to the battlefield and headed for the Sweet-Grass Hills. Not a Piegan had been even wounded in the conflict of the night. Every one was happy. All that summer day the victory song and the war songs of the Blackfeet could be heard at one part and another of our three-mile-long caravan moving steadily south-

astward over the brown plains. And that ight, after we had camped and broken our fast eside a marshy lake, more than half the people lackened their faces and hands and performed grand scalp dance.

This fearful massacre of the Crees took place bout two miles above the present town of ethbridge, Province of Alberta. Long after- vards we learned through the North Blackfeet nat the war party had seen only the lodges of ne Small Robes and the Lone Eaters, and, be- eving them to comprise the whole camp, had dvanced to what they thought would be cer- in victory. They had been five hundred and nirty strong at sundown of that day, but only ighty-seven of them ever returned to their amp in the muskegs of the North. With one xception, which I shall relate later, this was ne most crushing defeat that the Piegans ever nflicted upon their many enemies.

The following evening we camped on the ittle (Milk) River, and late in the afternoon f the next day set up the lodges beside a small tream flowing southward from the West Butte

of the Sweet-Grass Hills, and sinking in a sand and gravel flat less than a mile from the foot of the red rock cañon from which it issues. From camp we could see a few miles to the east the Middle Butte of the short range, a cone-shaped peak rising six or eight hundred feet above the general level of the plain.

It was at the foot of this butte, according to ancient tradition, that Kut-o-yis, destroyer of beasts and reptiles that killed and ate the early people, encountered and vanquished the giant wolf. Here they met, and the wolf, opening wide his enormous jaws, swallowed Kut-o-yis without so much as once biting him. Down the animal's long throat he went, and into the huge stomach, where, in the black darkness, were a number of people who had been swallowed that morning. They were wailing, crying, and slowly sinking into the stupor preceding death.

"Here, weak ones, take courage," Kut-o-yis said to them, going round and giving each person a fierce shake. "Stand up now, and dance with me, and I will set you free."

"You speak foolishly," one answered. "Not he greatest medicine in the world could save us. Were we to crawl up that fearful throat, nap would go the huge teeth as we tried to eave the mouth and we would be cut in two."

"Let me hear no more such talk," cried Kut-o-yis, very angry now.

And kicking and striking, and calling bad names, he made all there arise and dance, and ing a certain medicine song. And feeling of ach person, his legs and body and arms, he ound the strongest of them all, and jumping pon his shoulders sat there.

"Now! Now! Dance harder. Sing louder," e cried, and grasping his stone knife firmly n his right hand, held it straight up as far as e could reach; and every time the man he ode sprang up in the ever-quickening dance he knife pierced the roof of the big stomach, enetrated farther and farther beyond until it truck the heart, and with one great quiver of ts huge muscles the giant wolf fell over dead. When that happened, Kut-o-yis carved a big ole in the side of the animal and liberated its

victims. So perished the last of the monster eaters of the people.

This was the tale that White Wolf told us as we sat round the little lodge fire that evening. He added that this butte was sacred to Kut-o-yis; that his spirit lived there, and allowed no one to hunt in that vicinity. Since the very earliest times, no member of any of the Blackfeet tribes had so much as set foot upon it.

"Then it is time that some one should visit the place," I said. "To-morrow I shall climb to the top of it."

"And I will go with you," Pitamakan quietly put in.

At that the women cried out, begging us to do no such rash thing. White Wolf, raising his voice above the din of their entreaties, forbade our going near the place. We did not answer him, and he took it for granted that his command would be obeyed.

There were great numbers of deer and elk on the pine-timbered slopes of the West Butte, and many bighorn on its bare, rocky crest. As some of the people wanted skins of these animals

for tanning into leather for clothing, the chiefs decided not to move camp for some days.

The hunters scattered out early the next morning, some going up on the butte after the deer, bighorn, and elk, others riding out on the plain to kill buffalo. The whole country was black with them. Pitamakan and I had a look at our band of horses as our boy drove them in to water, and then we roped and saddled each of us a strong and gentle animal, and rode out of camp, straight toward the Middle Butte. Between it and the West Butte there is a low, smooth pass running down on the north side to the breaks of Little River. Upon coming to this we followed it to the summit, then turned east for a mile or more and began to climb the butte from the north side. The ascent was not difficult, and within a couple of hours after leaving camp we arrived at the extreme height of the cone, and dismounted.

As we sat there enjoying the view of the vast, buffalo-covered plains, and with the aid of the glass watching the hunters here and there chasing a herd and making their kills, we presently

noticed a lone horseman coming straight toward the butte from camp. We paid little attention to him until a dazzling, blinding light was suddenly and intermittently flashed in our eyes. At that Pitamakan turned the glass on the horseman, now dismounted and not more than a mile away, and soon announced that he was his father, and that it was he who had flashed the light into our eyes by the aid of a small mirror. In those days nearly all male Indians carried a hand mirror; it was an article of adornment, and it was always useful for signaling.

White Wolf, seeing by the aid of his telescope that he had attracted our attention, signed to us to go to him. With a wave of his right hand and arm Pitamakan refused, adding, with the proper signs: "Here we will sit for a long time."

Upon receiving that answer, White Wolf mounted his horse and rode swiftly eastward. "He is mad," said Pitamakan. "We will get a good scolding to-night."

I had the glass now, and was watching the chief quirt his horse to higher and higher

peed. Suddenly down he and his horse went, nd from a *coulée* near by and in front of him here rose three puffs of smoke. An instant ater the dull report of three guns reached our ars.

CHAPTER III

"THEY have killed him—my father!" Pitamakan cried, as we mounted our horses and tore down the side of the butte regardless of its steepness and the insecure footing for the animals.

We could see White Wolf's horse making ineffectual struggles to get up on its feet, but the chief lay still where he had fallen. The three men who had fired at him were now out of the *coulée* and running toward him, apparently not noticing our approach.

"They will get to him, they will take his scalp before we can reach him!" Pitamakan wailed, and we urged our horses with quirt and heels to greater speed; they went down that steep hillside with leaps so long that I felt I was flying instead of riding.

But White Wolf was not dead. When the three men were within a hundred yards from where he lay, he suddenly sat up and fired, and one of them stumbled and fell flat. That did

not deter the others; on they came, satisfied, no doubt, that they could finish him before he could reload his rifle. They had not made a farther advance of more than ten yards, however, before the chief opened fire on them with his revolver. At the same time they saw us; and turning sharp about they ran for the *coulée* from which they had come, and reached its shelter at the same time that we arrived at White Wolf's side.

"My father! Are you hurt?" Pitamakan asked.

"Not much; just a little wound," the chief answered, looking up at us and showing a face of ashen color. "Don't mind me, I will be all right; go and kill those two men."

There was blood upon his white blanket leggin, a great red stain striping it from the knee down. We hesitated about leaving him, were about to dismount, when he roared at us: "Go! Go! I tell you, and kill those two men."

We started then, and passing the chief's horse noticed that it was dead. "Let us separate," Pitamakan said. "I will cross the *coulée*

away up it, and you cross it down below. This side of it is a cut bank, you see, but the other side is a slope. Over there we can see the enemy before riding right on top of them, and probably we can get them by doing some good long-distance shooting."

From there, making each of us a wide détour, we crossed the *coulée* about a mile apart, and then, riding out from it several hundred yards, turned towards each other. We walked our horses and closely scanned the wash for sight of the two men. The whole length of it between us was in plain view, but even with the telescope I could see nothing of them. There could be no doubt that they were somewhere along it, in all probability directly opposite White Wolf and his dead horse. They had not had time to go far up or down the *coulée*, and they certainly had not left it.

Pitamakan and I met in the course of fifteen or twenty minutes.

"You have seen nothing of them?" he asked.

"Not a sign."

At that he took the glass from me and began searching the *coulée* with it. His father sat as we had just left him, a grim statue of pain and wrath.

Here and there spring freshets had undermined the cut bank on the west side of the *coulée* and let down great chunks of the hard adobe earth; and behind a pile of them three or four feet high, the glass presently revealed the top of a black head of hair, and a single eagle tail feather rising from the back of it.

"It is a long shot and a small mark," Pitamakan said, after telling me what he had found, "but if we dismount and take careful aim I believe that we can, one or the other of us, make a hit. Here, take the far-seeing instrument" (*is-sah-pi-atch-is*) "and have a look at him."

I was some time in finding what he described, although he kept explaining to me the exact position of the hidden man. It was, indeed, a small mark, just a couple of inches of hair and head rising above two chunks of earth. Through the narrow space between them sharp eyes were undoubtedly watching our every

movement. The distance was more than two hundred yards. With the naked eye we could see neither the black hair nor the upstanding eagle feather. "The only thing to do," I said, handing back the glass, "is to shoot at the dark space between the two pieces of earth, and take chances on the result."

"Well, let us do that," Pitamakan agreed, again looking through the glass. Suddenly he lowered it and gasped: "My father! Just now he toppled over. Come."

And away he went, down toward the nearest crossing of the *coulée*, I after him as fast as my horse could jump. Within five minutes we dismounted beside the chief, now lying prone on the grass. His eyes were closed as if he slept; and so he did; but it was the sleep from which no one ever wakes. The enemy's bullet had severed the main artery of his leg.

I shall never forget the expression on my friend's face as he stared down at his dead father. Intense anguish of mind was written there; and presently he wailed: "It is my fault: my fault that he lies there. I *would* go

this Kut-o-yis Butte; and he followed me; nd here lies his body. It was I who killed im, best of fathers!"

And again: "I have strayed far from the eliefs of my people. I have said to myself that heir tales of the gods were but idle dreams; nd now, see how I am punished for my unbe- ef. Kut-o-yis *is!* Here, invisible, his shadow ves, and this is what I get from him in pay- ent for my doubts. Why did he not take me, wonder, instead of my believing father?"

"Brother, it was not your fault," I offered, ying to comfort him. "When man is born, that moment is a time and a place set for his eath, and no act of his can change it. It was be that after years of happy wandering that nemy yonder should fall before your father's un, and that he himself should at this place ll, and his shadow pass on to the Sand Hills. is not your fault that he is gone. I tell you, was to be; and nothing, no power of ours ould prevent it. No one can see what the fu- re has in store for him."

"That is the white man's belief, not ours,"

Pitamakan replied. "I wish that I could believe it, for it is comforting."

"Do believe it. You must believe it, for it is plain truth," I insisted, as I knelt and straightened out the body of the dead chief and covered it with a blanket.

"Go now and bring my mother here. Leave your rifle with me; I may need it," said Pitamakan when I rose.

And after recinching my saddle I set out for camp as fast as my horse could carry me.

A couple of hours later I returned to the place with forty or fifty men, followed by a number of wailing women, wives, relatives, and friends of the dead chief. From afar we sighted Pitamakan sitting motionless near the body.

When we came to him, he looked up at us and said to Big Lake: "You see what I have done. Because I did not mind my father he lies here, dead."

"My son, it was to be," the old chief answered. "You could not know that this would happen. We mourn with you. Your loss is our loss. Your father was a brave, kind-hearted man."

"*Ai!* That he was," said Black Elk, a nervous, active warrior of much renown. "There are two more of the enemy, your partner tells us. Have you seen them?"

For reply, Pitamakan merely slid the palm of his right across the palm of his left hand, the sign meaning — wiped out; forever gone.

"They are wiped out, are they?" Black Elk exclaimed. "You killed them?"

"Yes, I killed them. They lie over there in the *coulée*. They were Assiniboines."

All except Big Lake and myself hurried off to the *coulée* to see.

The women were coming close now, the wives wailing: "White Wolf! Our protector! He is dead, he is gone! Oh, oh! Ah, ah!" These cries were heartrending, and as the chant in slow, sad minor key reached his ears, Pitamakan broke down and wept as only the strong and brave do weep when their nerves give way. Big Lake and I got him upon his horse and induced him to return to camp with us, where both he and I remained in the old chief's lodge for the night. The women brought in the

remains of White Wolf on a *travois*, and prepared it for burial.

The next morning all the chiefs, all the different orders of the All Friends Society, and many others, followed the body to its last resting-place. Wrapped in fine robes and blankets, it was lashed on a platform of poles that had been built in the branches of a huge cottonwood tree, and beside it were laid the weapons, shield, war clothes, and medicines of the deceased. Lastly, five fine horses were killed beside the tree, so that the chief's shadow would not lack shadow mounts in the Sand Hills, dreary abode of all the Blackfeet dead.

As soon as the funeral was over, the women scattered out here and there in the brush to wail and mourn. They had cut off their hair, scarified the calves of their legs with sharp knives, and Pitamakan's mother had even severed the first joint of her little finger as evidence of her overwhelming grief.

There was a family council in the lodge that evening. Said Pitamakan: "My mother will of course remain with me, so this is her lodge.

You others, my foster mothers, will of course wish to return to your own relatives, and it is right that you should do so. What horses and other property my father gave you all during his lifetime is yours to dispose of, or keep, as your will. Everything that he owned at the time of his death is mine, according to the laws of our people. But I do not believe in that law. I believe that widows should inherit the property of the husband and father. Therefore, tomorrow, all that my father left shall be divided equally among you, his horses, his robes and furs, and all other things. For myself I wish nothing. I have now a large herd of horses, and everything else I need."

The women were so overcome with grief that they made then no reply to his generous decision, but later they praised his unprecedented goodness of heart. As soon as he had finished his little speech, they all went out of the lodge and resumed their wailing, and did not return until they had become so hoarse that they could not speak above a whisper. Their mourning continued for weeks and months;

and even years afterwards Pitamakan's mother frequently gave way to a period of wailing for her man.

On the morning following the burial, camp was moved to the foot of the East Butte of the Hills, and there Pitamakan made the division of his father's property, thereby stirring up not a little ill-feeling. Some of those who were expecting to inherit all of a father's or brother's wealth declared that this would be a bad precedent to establish, and even went so far as to ask the chiefs to hold a council, and order Pitamakan to take back what he had so foolishly given away.

Loudest of all in denouncing him was Long Bear. His father owned a large herd of horses, and he feared that the old man might try to emulate Pitamakan's generosity by giving them all away before setting out on the trail to the Sand Hills. No one paid any attention to his foolish rantings, and that made him all the more bitter in his hatred for my friend.

During the next three or four days there was much quiet visiting and talking in this and that

odge of the old men of the Small Robes band. The tribal chief, Big Lake, was often invited o consult with them. A new chief was to be hosen in place of White Wolf, and interest vas keen as to who would be his successor. Many a sturdy warrior awaited their decision vith such anxiety that sleeping and eating and he daily activities of ordinary life were entirely ut of the question. As vain and conceited as e was young, Long Bear believed that he night get the coveted position, and through he women we heard of him sneaking into the odges of the old men and offering them horses o name him as their choice. We could not earn that any one of them had accepted his ribe.

It was on the fifth day of our encampment n this place that Big Lake asked the use of ur lodge for the purpose of holding a council, nd by that we knew that we were soon to have new chief. I asked and received permission o be present at the council, and Pitamakan was sked to be there and state his preference for is father's successor, but he declined the honor

and rode out on the plains to be alone in his almost unbearable grief.

By mid-forenoon the big lodge was well filled by the old men of our band, men who had ceased to hunt and follow the war trail, and were now supported in comfort by their married sons and daughters. Wise old men they were, keen analysts of character; and pride in their band and their tribe was guaranty enough that the choice they were about to make would be a good one. Big Lake, sitting on the couch opposite the doorway, presided at the council. To open it he filled a huge pipe with tobacco and herbs, and lit it. Then it was passed from hand to hand round the circle, each person taking in turn a few whiffs of the fragrant smoke, and offering up a short prayer for the favor of the gods.

"He who lived in this lodge has gone from us, and this band of our people no longer has a chief," Big Lake began, when the pipe had been smoked out and returned to him. "So it is that we are gathered here to-day to appoint a chief in the place of that good and brave man

who was the friend of the poor, and brother to us all. Come. Speak up. Let us decide who we shall be."

There was a moment's silence, each person waiting for some one else to announce a choice. Then said old Red Eagle: "We have many good men for this place. It is difficult to choose. We old ones have talked together, but somehow we could not agree. Let us try to agree on some one now. I, myself, should like to have Bull Turns Around (Stum-iks O-to-kaw-i) for our chief. What say you all?"

Much to my surprise, the proposal met with unanimous consent, and Red Eagle was appointed to visit the warrior and tell him that he was the old men's choice for chief of the Small Robes band. The council then broke up, and within ten minutes the whole camp knew the result of it.

According to ancient custom, Bull Turns Around gave a great feast to the old men that night, and in a little speech he promised to do all that he could for the welfare of the band and the tribe. He was a tall, active man of

about forty years, and had a fine war record, and was noted for generosity to all who needed help of any kind.

On the following day Pitamakan and I were pleasantly surprised by an invitation to become members of the Mut-siks, or Braves band of the I-kun-uh-kah-tsi, or All Friends Society. This was a great honor for us, as the membership of this band was generally limited to men of about forty years of age who had great war records. It meant that, young as we were, the Braves considered us their equals in experience and desirable additions to their members.

In the center of the great circle of the camp were set up the lodges of the Braves, the Crazy Dogs, Raven Carriers, Bulls, and other bands of the All Friends Society, each lodge owned by the chief or head man of each particular band. These lodges were headquarters, the general meeting and lounging-place for the members of the respective bands. On the evening of the day that we were invited to join the Braves, Pitamakan and I were escorted to the lodge of the band by no less a person than Bull Turns

SITTING MOTIONLESS NEAR THE BODY

Around, our new chief. Upon entering it, we found it well filled by the members, all of whom gave us kindly greeting, and added: "Welcome, new Braves."

The head man of the band, Sin-o-pá-pi-nan, Fox Eyes, smilingly motioned us to seats near the doorway, and invited our escort, as befitted his station, to take the seat of honor at the rear of the lodge. The women then passed round a little feast, and after that the host filled a big pipe, and that went the round of the circle, the different members of the band meanwhile conversing with one another upon various subjects. No one addressed us, however, until the pipe had been smoked out and returned to the owner; then after carefully removing the ashes and laying aside the heavy stone bowl to cool, Fox Eyes looked sharply at us and said: "Now, then, you two young men, give me your whole attention."

"*Ai!* We listen," Pitamakan answered.

"Not since the time our forefathers organized this brave band of the All Friends have such young men as you two been asked to join

it," Fox Eyes continued. "Why, you are not really young men; you are just boys. But for all that we think that your place is with us; you have both been to far countries, you have killed many enemies, you have survived the dangers of the trails into those far countries, you have proved yourselves to be as wise, as cautious, and of as much courage as any of us. So it is that we invite you to become members of our band. As you know, the All Friends Society is not for pleasure only; its purpose is for the carrying-out of the laws made by our forefathers for the welfare of the people. Do you two agree to uphold these laws?"

"We do," Pitamakan and I replied.

"Even though your own relatives break the laws, you agree to assist in punishing them?"

"We do."

"Then you are from this time members of the Braves. This lodge is your lodge; here you are always welcome."

Such was our simple initiation into the chief band of the All Friends Society. The news quickly spread that we had become members

of it, and on the next day, as we went here and there in the camp, the people gave us new greetings, "Ah! Here are the young Braves"; or, "Welcome, tried warriors, upholders of the laws," they would say, and our hearts swelled with pride.

Long Bear no sooner heard of the honor that had been conferred upon us than he made application for membership in the Braves band. We happened to be in Fox Eye's lodge when the matter was discussed, but we took no part in it. There were present only five or six members besides us.

Our leader casually announced that he had received Long Bear's application, and added: "Do any of you here feel inclined to grant it?"

No one answered the question.

"Do you think it worth while to call a meeting to consider this request?"

"It is something not worth talking about," one of the members answered. "Who is Long Bear? What has he done more than to go to war two or three times? Who likes him anyhow? No one that I know of. Send him word

that his application to become a member of this band is refused."

The others present immediately signified that that was also their opinion, and turning to us, Fox Eyes said: "One of you boys go and tell Long Bear that his request cannot be granted."

The order startled both of us. Pitamakan gave me a quick, questioning glance and dropped his head. It was not for him to convey such a message to his bitter enemy, and so I said that I would go, and straightway left the lodge. It is needless to say that I took no pleasure in my errand. Long Bear was my enemy as well as Pitamakan's; my steps lagged as I approached his father's lodge, which was near our own within the bounds of the Small Robes band's position.

Arrived at the lodge, I stood beside it for a moment or two, listening. Only a couple of women were talking within. I believed that they were the only occupants, and that I could leave my message with them. So, with a feeling of relief, I raised the door curtain and stepped inside — and found myself facing Long

Bear, who was sitting on his father's couch at the back of the lodge.

He scowled up at me and asked: "Well, what brings you here?"

"A message from Fox Eyes," I answered shortly. "He bids me say to you that the Braves refuse you membership in their band."

"Ha! They are dogs; just mean dogs," Long Bear's mother cried.

But Long Bear said nothing for a moment; he kept glaring at me unblinkingly, a sort of greenish light in his eyes, his lips drawn back like those of an angry wolf. I turned to go, and had my hand on the door curtain when he found his voice: "Wait! Listen!" he called after me hoarsely, as if his mouth were parched. "I know why the Braves refused to let me join them. It is because of that dog Pitamakan. He was always my enemy, and so are you, for that matter. Both of you have talked against me there in the Braves' lodge. Well, you tell your friend this: I shall myself soon be chief of the Small Robes band, and some day head warrior of the Braves. Now, go!"

A few minutes later I was back in the Braves' lodge and repeating Long Bear's words. All present made light of the message, Pitamakan included, but somehow I took it seriously. I could not help but believe that in some way Long Bear was a real menace to our lives.

A couple of days later we heard that Long Bear and his friend One Horn had gone away to war, and every evening thereafter we were reminded of the fact by hearing a medicine man riding through the camp, calling out their names and asking the people to pray for their safety and success.

They had been gone about five or six days when the chiefs ordered camp to be moved. Accordingly, down came the lodges very early one morning, and we trailed southward, and that evening made camp on the Marias River about forty miles due north of Fort Benton. Preparatory to going in to the Fort for ammunition and supplies of various kinds, the hunters made large killings of buffalo, and the women were kept busy drying the meat; each family needed enough of it to last during the

eight or ten days that the camp would remain at the Fort.

On the third night of our stay on the Marias an old woman came into our lodge one evening and humbly sat herself down by the doorway. Pitamakan's mother greeted her kindly, and at the same time passed her a large dish of boiled meat with a strip of white, flakey back fat on top of it. With trembling hand the woman put a morsel of the meat in her mouth, and then, pushing the dish toward the fireplace, she suddenly covered her head with her robe and began to cry.

"Ha! Here is trouble," Pitamakan exclaimed, and in a louder voice he bade the poor old creature tell him the reason for her grief.

It was some time before she could sufficiently control her voice to do so, and then she faltered: —

"Oh, Pitamakan! Oh, young man chief! Oh, generous one! As you love your mother, as you reverence the great sun, have pity on us."

"I do pity you," said Pitamakan. "Tell me, tell me quick, what I can do for you."

"Oh, good son of a good father, have you not heard? This morning my grandson lost his only swift horse, his buffalo runner, upon which we depended for meat; for our food, and our shelter, too.[1] It fell as he was riding it, chasing a herd, and broke its neck. As you know, we are only two, my grandson Weasel Tail and I. We have no relatives to help us, and so I have come to ask you to lend us a good horse, one upon which he can chase and kill what we need for a living."

"I will do better than that by you," Pitamakan immediately answered. "Tell Weasel Tail that I will give him a good buffalo horse to-morrow morning."

At that the old woman called upon the sun to bless Pitamakan, the generous one, and soon afterward she went happily home to tell her grandson the good news. We went to bed early, expecting ourselves to do some buffalo running the next day. Close to the lodge were picketed two of our best horses; our herder, Short Bow,

[1] Meaning the buffalo skins for making into leather for lodge coverings.

had orders to catch up two pack-horses from our herd early in the morning, and follow us. He was to take back to camp what meat we might kill.

We were up early, just as soon as there was light enough to enable us to water and then saddle our buffalo runners. Pitamakan's mother cooked the morning meal for us and we ate heartily, then sat impatiently waiting for Short Bow and the pack-animals. The sun was half an hour high when he suddenly thrust aside the door curtain, and looking in at us, wild-eyed, gasped out: "A war party has been here during the night. Your whole herd of horses is gone."

"Are you sure of it?" I asked. "They may be down in the river bottom, or perhaps cached out in some deep *coulée*."

"I am sure that they are stolen," he replied. "I found the trail of them. The thieves are driving them straight east from here."

CHAPTER IV

As we rushed out of the lodge, others in different parts of the camp were loudly shouting that their horses were missing, and there was a general scurrying to borrow animals on which to pursue the war party. We were about to mount our horses and start out on the trail of the thieves when Weasel Tail's old mother came limping up to Pitamakan, and said: —

"Your horses have all been taken, I hear. Oh, that is bad. I do not know what we shall do, now that you cannot give us one. It is that we must starve."

"A promise is a promise," Pitamakan said. "Here! Take this horse. It is the only one I have, but it is yours." And with that he flung off the saddle and handed the woman the end of the trail rope. Then, turning to Short Bow, he told him to go to Fox Eyes, or any other one of the Braves, and ask for the loan of a good horse. The boy soon returned

with one, and in a short time we, and forty or fifty others, were following the trail of the missing herds. From a point on the plain about a mile north of camp, it led us due east toward the Bear Paw Mountains.

Within an hour we came upon several old horses that the war party had allowed to drop out of the big bunch they were driving, and thereafter until noon we passed, every mile or so, a few head that had been abandoned, among them several small, weak colts bearing our fresh "X" brand on the hip. As the little things could not possibly live without their mother's milk, I put each one out of its misery with a well-placed shot.

At midday we came to a broad, deep *coulée* running toward Milk River, and containing here and there good-sized pools of water. Here we found more than a hundred of the horses that had been taken from our camp, but not one of them bore Pitamakan's brand. These completed the number that others had missed in the early morning. It was evident enough that from this place the war party had gone on

with only the animals that belonged to my partner and me. This puzzled us all, for a moment, and then Pitamakan suddenly exclaimed: —

"Friends, it is all plain enough to me. I will mention no name, but it is certain that an enemy of mine drove the horses away from our camp last night. He did not want your horses, so here, where daylight came upon him, he cut them out. You have now recovered all the horses that you lost, so it is best that you all return to camp and leave Ah-ta-to-yi and me to follow and overtake this enemy as best we can."

"Younger brother, we will not leave you; we will go with you to the end of this trail," said Black Elk, a member of the Braves band; and every one else there in one way and another declared his intention to go on with us in quest of our horses and our enemy.

"But listen, friends. Just hear me now," Pitamakan objected. "Ah-ta-to-yi and I do not need you and your women at home do. You have meat to kill, and trading to be done

at the Long Knives' house on the Big River. So go you all back, take care of my mother, some of you, and allow us to go on by ourselves. No doubt we will soon join you at the Big River."

"I will lend your mother horses," Black Elk said, "and my women shall help her when we move camp."

So it was settled, and after drinking our fill at one of the water pools, we parted from our friends and again took up the trail of our horses. It was easy enough to follow, the sharp, hard hoofs of the animals having crushed flat a wide path in the still green and tender prairie grasses. I started off in the lead, at a swift lope, and Pitamakan called to me to slow up.

"We cannot expect soon to overtake the thieves," he explained. "They are rushing through the country at top speed, often changing their mounts for fresh ones. We have only the one horse each, and must not tax their strength. We have to ride slow and steadily; but every trail has an end, and sometime, somewhere off there to the east, we will come to

the end of this one, and to our herd and those who stole it."

"You think that it is no other than Long Bear and his helper One Horn that we are following?" I asked.

"Why, who else could it be? Is n't it plain enough? In the night our own and other horses are rounded up where they graze and driven away; and as soon as daylight comes all the animals but ours are dropped, are cut out and left behind. Now, had the thieves been Assiniboines, or Crows, or Crees, or any other of the enemies of our tribe, they would have taken all the horses they could drive away, and not one would they have cut out and left so long as it could be driven. It is Long Bear, and none other, who has done this to us."

"What do you think he intends to do with the herd?"

"That is something we have to learn. He has some plan by which he intends to place them where we can never recover them."

All that afternoon we tried to guess what that plan might be, but could come to no

conclusion. From the *coulée* of the water pools the trail kept running straight toward a point somewhat north of the Bear Paws, and it was evident that the thieves were heading for Milk River. Night came on while we were still twelve or fifteen miles from the stream. As our horses were well played out, we were obliged to make a dry camp. We did not go to sleep supperless, however. In the gathering dusk I sneaked up close to a band of antelope and killed a fat buck, and we roasted some of the meat over a little fire of dry sagebrush roots and buffalo chips.

On the following day we struck Milk River about ten o'clock and found where the thieves had rested for several hours and had roasted some buffalo ribs. Now their trail led straight down the broad river valley, which was here and there well timbered with cottonwoods and large groves of willows. These places offered a fine opportunity for the thieves to conceal themselves and ambush us. So we kept well out to the south rim of the valley, and went into it only at long intervals, to make sure that

we were riding parallel to the trail. During the day we found seven more colts that had dropped out of the band, and killed them all. Better that than a lingering and painful death for them from starvation. Every time we came upon one of these abandoned, sucking creatures Pitamakan's anger increased until, toward sunset, he was in such a rage that he could hardly speak.

About a half-hour before dark we were riding across a high point where the river made a bend toward the south. Then, not more than a mile ahead, several bunches of buffalo appeared out on the rolling plain, running some of them to the north, some eastward, and others directly toward us. They left behind them long streamers of dust in the still summer air. Just ahead there was a narrow deep *coulée*. We lost no time in getting into it; then we dismounted and climbed the other side only far enough to obtain a view of the country without exposing more than our head and shoulders. The cause of the commotion among the game soon appeared. From the direction of the Bear Paw

Mountains there came in sight a long column of riders, and pack, and *travois*, and loose horses; a whole tribe of people was moving down into the river valley to camp.

We watched them come to a halt just outside a grove of cottonwoods, saw one lodge after another suddenly loom up white against the dark background of the timber, and then night came and we could see nothing more than the dull, red glow of the lodges as the women lit small cooking-fires within them. Who were the people? Assiniboines or Gros Ventres? That we had to know; if they were Gros Ventres we were assured of a hearty welcome; for almost a century these people had lived in the Blackfoot country as a part of the Blackfoot Confederacy.

"Come on. We will go close enough to hear the people talk, and learn if they are friend or foe," said Pitamakan; and remounting our weary horses we rode down into the valley and straight toward the glowing lodges.

When within a couple of hundred yards of the camp, Pitamakan left me to hold the horses,

and himself sneaked slowly toward the nearest lodges. He was gone only a few moments, and, returning, said that we were in luck; the campers were Gros Ventres. So we rode boldly in, and asked the first person we met the location of the chief's lodge.

"Come, follow me, and I will show it to you," he answered in good Blackfoot, and we were soon comfortably seated on either side of the old man in his large, twenty-two-skin lodge, one of his sons having taken charge of our horses.

High Bear was the name of the old chief. I had often seen him at the Fort and in the Blackfoot camp when the two tribes happened to be traveling and hunting together. He recognized us the moment we stepped inside the lodge, and gave us a hearty welcome, adding: "My home is your home. All that is mine is also yours."

Like most Gros Ventres, he spoke good Blackfoot. For that matter, the Blackfoot language was spoken more or less by the Kootenai, Flathead, Pend d'Oreille, and other neighbor-

ing tribes. But the Blackfeet themselves never learned an outside, or, so to speak, a foreign, tongue. They were without doubt the proudest, most egotistical, of all the American Indian tribes; they considered it beneath their dignity to learn the language of another tribe. One name they had for themselves was *Nĭt-si-tuppi:* the "One" or "Only People." In their estimation of themselves they were aristocrats, and all other tribes were of plebeian stock.

The women of the lodge set food before us, and while eating the well-browned buffalo ribs we explained the reason for our presence in the Bear Paw country. We did not, however, state that we believed that a member of our own tribe had stolen our herd, nor did we mention the fact that the thief had turned loose on the trail all the animals he had taken that did not belong to us.

"Let us not accuse One Horn of this until we have proof that he did it," Pitamakan had said to me as we were entering the friendly camp.

"Well, it is plain enough that the Assini-

boines stole your horses," said High Bear, after we had told him our tale, "and we will help you to recover them. It is our duty always to aid the Blackfeet. You come to us at just the right time for this. My children are about to start on a raid against the Assiniboines, and only yesterday a couple of scouts I sent out returned and reported that the tribe is encamped on this river, a short distance above the wide bottom where it joins the Big River. They start out to-morrow night, and you shall go with them."

The tribal organization and religion of the Gros Ventres differed but slightly from that of the Blackfeet. On the following day the men who were to form the war party went through the regulation sacred sweat ceremony under the auspices of the medicine men, and then made sacrifices and vows to the sun. At sundown they all gathered, more than two hundred strong, in front of High Bear's lodge, each man on his favorite horse, and each one carrying attached to his elk-horn-bowed saddle his finest war clothes and bull-hide shield decorated with

eagle tail feathers. The leader of the party was a noted warrior of forty or more years, named High Star. I had often met him at the Fort, where he was always welcome because of his genial manners and his ability to amuse the *voyageurs* and other employees with exciting and generally exceedingly entertaining tales. His face was sober enough now as he gave the order to start and led the way, followed closely by a young man on a white horse carrying his sacred, or medicine, pipe wrapped in many a fold of gorgeously painted and fringed buckskin.

All that night we rode steadily down the Valley of Milk, or as the Blackfeet and Gros Ventres call it, the Little River. At daylight we went into camp in a large grove of cottonwoods where there was plenty of grass and wild pea-vine for the horses. High Star at once detailed a couple of men to keep watch on the country from each end of the timber, and then went alone to a distant part of the woods to smoke his sacred pipe, to pray, and in sleep try by his dreams to divine what the future had in store for us.

Pitamakan and I, of course, were very anxious to know if we were still on the trail of our horses, and in the gray light of the morning we rode out across the valley in search of it. According to the signs there had been a vast herd of buffalo in the bottom on the day before, but despite their thorough trampling of the grass and earth, we found what we sought close to the south rim of the valley. At first only a few faint imprints of horses' hoofs; but by following these, and passing the broad trail of the feeding and traveling buffalo, within a half-mile we came upon the still fairly fresh and plain trail of our animals. Again, for the thousandth time, perhaps, we tried — and of course in vain — to figure out what Long Bear intended to do with them.

We were all well supplied with dry meat and pemmican, so no meat was killed this morning, nor were any fires built. We passed the day resting and sleeping, and toward sundown watered our horses and saddled them. When all were ready for the start, High Star came from his lone retreat, followed by his servant with the

sacred pipe. He was now a very different man from the one we had known at the Fort and in camp. There was no smile on his face as he stalked past us to his horse, and his generally merry and mischievous eyes were now absolutely expressionless. He seemed not to see us, but to be staring at something far off that was visible to him alone. All there present believed that he was great medicine and that upon his dreams, and his experience as a leader of war parties, depended the success or failure of the expedition against the wily Assiniboines. No one spoke to him, but when he had mounted his horse he wheeled about and said, tersely: —

"I have smoked, and with prayer made the usual sacrifice to the sun. I have had two dreams during the day, but both were without meaning. My medicine, however, tells me that so far all is well with us. Let us go on."

It was now quite dusk where we were in the center of the big grove. In starting we spread out for a hundred yards or more, each rider choosing his own route among the thickly clustering trees and through dense patches of

rose brush. In this manner we had proceeded to within a couple of hundred yards of the eastern edge of the grove, when, almost under the feet of the horses in the center of the advance, a couple of cub bears suddenly began to squall, and were answered by the savage roar of their big, grizzly mother as she came leaping through the brush to their defense. In their fright, instead of running toward her, the young ones scurried right in among us, now this way, now that, squalling louder than ever.

In about half a minute the old mother was after them, roaring, and woofing, and striking at every moving animal in her path. The strong odor of the bear, even more than the sight of her and the noise she made, stampeded the horses. Some of them squealed frantically; some bolted; some bucked and threw their riders, and then plunged away in the brush.

On all sides there rose a hubbub of voices. Some of the thrown scrambled frantically up into trees, at the same time begging that their vanishing horses be pursued and caught. Others shouted: "Kill it! Kill the bear!"

And finally one shot, then another, and another was fired. Then came the welcome shout: "It is dead. The bear is dead."

I was at the outer edge of the grove, my horse having become unmanageable from the time it first scented the bear. Now I could not make it go back into the timber. It stood and trembled and paid no attention whatever to the sting of my quirt.

It was fully half an hour before the last of the riderless horses were recovered; two of them had been so severely clawed by the bear that they had to be killed. The owners, however, would not listen to High Star's suggestion that they return to the Gros Ventre camp, and pluckily kept on with us by riding double with one and another of the party. That the bear had not killed or even injured any one of the party was considered a good omen.

We were now in the big bend of the river, where it makes a far curve to the north, and then swings southeastward toward the Missouri. A short cut to the believed location of the Assiniboine camp would have been di-

rectly eastward across the bend, but for several reasons it was thought best to follow the longer route. First, because the Assiniboines had perhaps moved up the river since the Gros Ventre scouts had seen their camp; and second, because Pitamakan and I wanted to keep close on the trail of our horses. During the night we made good time, and at dawn again camped in a large cottonwood grove. Another night ride, our comrades told us, would take us almost to the mouth of the river.

The whole party was now out of meat, and at High Bear's request Pitamakan and I went out to get some, a couple of the Gros Ventres accompanying us to help butcher and pack in whatever we might kill. There were no buffalo in sight down the valley, nor any other game, for that matter, so we rode out on the rolling plain south of the river, and presently discovered a large herd of buffalo slowly moving and grazing over the top of a long, low ridge about a mile away. We waited patiently where we were until the last of the stragglers had disappeared over the crest of it, and then

rode swiftly forward in their wake. As we had expected, a part of the herd was not more than a couple of hundred yards down the farther side of the ridge when we reached the top, and rushing our horses we tore into the midst of it and killed each of us two fat cows in a short run. That was more than enough meat for the whole party; assisted by the Gros Ventres we began skinning and cutting up the animals as rapidly as possible.

We had been at work some time when I straightened up to stretch and ease the muscles of my back. Happening to look off to the south, I got a brief view of two riders as they passed behind another ridge on the plain about two miles off.

"Pitamakan! Get on your horse! Two riders are out there traveling west," I cried, as I sheathed my knife and ran to my own animal.

Neither of our Gros Ventre helpers could understand Blackfoot, but I found time to sign to them that I had discovered two riders. Then they were not slow in getting into the saddle and following us as we plied the quirt.

I took the lead, heading south of west and avoiding all the hillocks on the plain; thus, after a fast run of a couple of miles, we mounted a ridge that was too long to be circled, and saw the two men riding a leisurely trot about half a mile farther on. At that we urged our horses still harder, to the utmost limit of their speed; and at the same time the two we were after discovered us, and began to use their quirts. Within five minutes we realized that it was useless to pursue them. Their horses were apparently as large and as powerfully built as were ours, and evidently they were fresh, while our animals had been going since sundown of the evening before. The two men drew away from us so easily and rapidly that we soon give up the chase. Springing to the ground I got out my telescope for a good look at them. I could not see their faces, for when they looked back at us they carefully covered them with a corner of their blanket togas; but I noted that one of the two was tall, and of heavy build, and the other slender, and of less than the average height.

Just before they passed out of sight behind a low ridge, Pitamakan took the glass from me and looked them over.

"They are of the same build as Long Bear and One Horn," he said, after they had passed from view.

"Yes."

"If I remember rightly, the last time I saw the two, Long Bear wore a red blanket, and One Horn a white one."

"They did; the same as these two just gone out of sight; I also noticed that," I said. "I am sure that those riders are One Horn and Long Bear."

"So am I," Pitamakan agreed; "but, mind you, we can't prove it. We did not see their faces. Red and white blankets are worn by all tribes. There are many who are tall and heavy, and slender and short, besides our two enemies. But tell me: did you notice anything else about them that seemed familiar?"

"Yes. There was something in the way the heavy one sat his horse that at once reminded me of Long Bear; he rode exactly like him,

straight-back, head up, the whole body bent away forward."

"Right you are," Pitamakan exclaimed; "but, oh, we can't prove that it was he. We can't prove it."

The two Gros Ventres, impatiently waiting for us to finish our talk, had by this time reached the limit of their endurance.

"Come. This is Assiniboine country," said one of them in the sign language. "It is dangerous for us to be out here in plain sight. Also, we are hungry. The whole party is hungry. Let us hurry back with meat to fill their stomachs."

So back we went to the buffalo, took each of us all the meat we could attach to our saddles, and jogged along toward the river.

As we rode side by side, Pitamakan broke a long silence by saying: "Yes, no doubt the two riders were Long Bear and One Horn. Now, what do you believe they have done with our horses?"

That was the very thing I had been thinking about, and I had a ready answer for the

question. "They have turned the band loose where the Assiniboines will soon find them."

"My thought exactly," Pitamakan agreed. "And what is more, I feel sure that the herd is not far below here. We ought to go on down the valley as soon as we finish a meal of this meat. I think that High Bear will be willing enough to go on if we tell him all about our trouble."

"Yes."

"And we will ask him to keep to himself our belief that Long Bear stole the horses. We must not accuse, until we can prove that he did it."

Our helpers explained why we had been so long a time getting the meat, but every one was too hungry to ask any questions. Small fires were quickly built, care being taken to use only cottonwood bark and other smokeless material, and the odor of roasting ribs and steaks soon filled the air. As usual, High Bear was off by himself in another part of the grove, and when his servant started to go to him with some of the roasted ribs, we sent word that we wished

to have a short talk with him. Returning, the boy told us to follow, and we were soon seated before the leader and telling him all about the theft of our horses. He heard us in silence to the end, and then calling the boy, who was seated at some distance eating his share of the meat, he told him to order the party to get ready to move on as soon as they had satisfied their hunger. Also, he promised that he would make no mention of our belief that Long Bear and his helper, Blackfeet themselves, were the stealers of our herd.

It was past midday when we left the grove and rode on down the valley, still on the trail of our horses. High Star thought it best to keep several scouts well in advance of the party, and at our request Pitamakan and I were made two of the number, we taking the south side, and three of the Gros Ventres the north side of the valley. We kept about a mile ahead of the party, and at every bend of the stream rode up on the rim of the plain in order to get the farthest view possible of the country ahead. Thus three or four hours passed. On all sides the numerous

bands of buffalo remained quiet, and by now and then making a détour in our course we did not disturb the bands of them feeding in the river bottom.

As the sun sank lower and lower our spirits also went down; another day was to pass, we thought, without gain to us. But late in the afternoon, all in a moment, there came a change in conditions ahead that keyed us up to the highest pitch of excitement. From the jutting point of a bend we discovered a long column of riders about five miles away — undoubtedly the Assiniboines moving up the river to fresh hunting-ground. Midway between them and us, in a grassy and treeless bottom, the glass revealed a large band of grazing horses.

"Our horses without doubt. I recognize one of them even at this distance," Pitamakan declared.

If we were to recover the band before the Assiniboines got sight of it, there was no time to be wasted. So, moving back down the point below the level of the plain, we dismounted, and with our blankets signaled High Star and

his men to come to us quickly. On the other side of the river the Gros Ventre scouts were signaling that they had discovered the enemy. While waiting for the party to come up, we moved again to the top of the point. The main body of the moving camp was cutting slowly across a big bend, but ahead of it, and traveling at a much faster gait, were a large number of hunters.

"Pitamakan, we are in for a big fight!" I exclaimed.

"Yes. Of course we are," he agreed. "And won't it be fun, though! Oh, why doesn't High Star come on faster with his men? I can hardly wait for this fight to begin."

CHAPTER V

AT the proper time we rode down off the point, joined High Star and his men, and briefly told what we had seen. He passed back word that we were all in for a big fight, and within five minutes every one of the warriors had on his war bonnet and war shirt, and some even managed to put on their war leggins while riding at breakneck speed. Thus decked out they presented a gorgeous front of rainbow colors, waving plumes, and fluttering eagle tail feathers. High Star's grim face lit up with pride as he looked back at them.

"They are as brave as they are fine-looking," he said to us. "You shall see that they know how to fight."

Pitamakan, ever mindful of the welfare of others, dropped back for a moment for a word of advice to the two men who were riding double — the two who had lost their horses in the fight with the grizzly bear.

"We will soon come to our band of horses," he said to them. "Most of the animals have never been ridden, so be sure to put your rope on one that shows old saddle scars; then you will not be thrown."

After passing round two different groves, we came at last to the edge of the big, open bottom in which our horses were grazing. When we sighted them they were about a quarter of a mile from us, and a half-mile or more beyond them were the Assiniboines, far more numerous than our party. They were coming up the bottom as fast as their horses could carry them.

"What think you of this?" said High Star. "I will tell off ten men to round up and drive back your horses, and the rest of us will show these Assiniboines how Gros Ventres and Blackfeet can fight."

"It is a good plan," Pitamakan answered.

So the chief issued his order, calling off the names of young men who had not yet experienced a really big battle.

On we went then across the big, level bot-

tom, on past our horses. Upon nearing the enemy the Gros Ventres raised their war cry, a mighty volume of fierce, high-keyed voices. A rather short, slender man led the Assiniboines, and kept looking back and urging them forward. High Star shouted to us that he was Little Otter, head chief of the tribe. His men were well scattered, coming on in single file, while we were all riding side by side, presenting a front several hundred yards in width.

While still too far away for their shots to be effective, the enemy opened fire at us. Waiting upon High Star's order, we did not answer. Straight toward our center Little Otter led his men, and it looked as if we were to have a hand-to-hand encounter; but when about two hundred and fifty yards from our line he suddenly swerved to the left, evidently with the intention of getting between us and the horses, which the young men had rounded up, and were driving as fast as possible on our back trail. Evidently the Assiniboines wanted the horses more than they did a fight with us.

"Now! Now, fire!" High Star shouted,

when we had swung our line round, and following the boom and crack of our smooth-bores and rifles several of the enemy and their horses went down.

After that it was every man for himself. The fastest of the Assiniboine riders went straight on after the herd of horses, exchanging shots with those of our party who were able to keep up with them. Our animals were all very tired.

As for the rest of us, we scattered out widely, each after some particular one of the enemy. True to their mode of warfare, the Assiniboines would not risk a fight at close quarters; always they kept retreating and trying their luck on long-distance shots. I was following a rider wearing a bright-painted cow-skin toga. He had singled me out as his mark and had sent several bullets whizzing uncomfortably close to my ears. I had twice fired at him without effect, and had made up my mind to hit his horse the next time, and then get him at close range. But High Star began calling loudly for help; a large number of the Assin-

iboines were outriding our few men in pursuit of the herd of horses, and threatened to kill the herders.

We all responded and rode back up the bottom, the remainder of the enemy following, and firing at us at will. I saw a man on my right and two on my left fall from their saddles. High Star ordered some of us to stop and hold the pursuers in check. Pitamakan and I remained with this division. He shouted to me that he was going to count *coup* on Little Otter or die in the attempt. He was by this time almost crazed with rage, and absolutely reckless.

"Come on. Come on!" he shouted to the Gros Ventres, and if they did not understand his Blackfoot, they did his signs, and they pressed close behind us as we led the charge. Again the Assiniboines scattered back at our approach, all but Little Otter, who for a moment held his ground and tauntingly signed us to come on.

"Leave that chief to me!" Pitamakan shouted and rode straight at him. Some of our

men struck off to the left, and the others, of whom I was one, to the right of his course; we were soon busy exchanging shots with the again retreating enemy. They pursued only when our backs were to them.

We were able to note what Pitamakan and the Assiniboine chief were doing. Little Otter kept his horse prancing until Pitamakan was within a hundred and fifty yards of him. Then, suddenly quieting the animal, he leaped to the ground, and knelt for a steady aim. It seemed that he could not miss. His aim was long. In my anxiety I fairly groaned. And then the chief fired, and missed, and at that a shout went up from the Gros Ventres, I yelling louder and more happily than any of them. We all held our breath after that, awaiting the result of Pitamakan's answering shot — but he did not shoot; instead he kept straight on with lowered rifle. The chief, meanwhile, made a quick dash for his horse and frightened it by his sudden and frantic efforts to get into the saddle. It kept prancing away from him and jerking at the end of the lead-rope, and by the time he

finally did succeed in getting astride it, Pitamakan was within fifty feet of him.

We were now between the chief and his men, so he struck off straight toward the outer edge of the bottom and the river. Then, for the first time, I noticed that his was a small and far from swift animal. Pitamakan on his tired horse overtook him before he could reload his gun, and instead of shooting, began to quirt him unmercifully on the back, thus counting for himself the greatest of all *coups*, and inflicting upon his victim the most humiliating punishment it is possible for an Indian to receive. And not satisfied with that, he finally snatched the chief's gun out of his hands, then dragged him from his horse, and halting before him said in the sign language: —

"You are not a chief, you are a nothing man. Go home and put on a woman's dress and sit with the women. That is where you belong."

And with that Pitamakan turned and left him, never once looking back. He had forever broken that man's prestige and power over his

people. No warrior would follow a leader who had been chased and whipped on the back on the battlefield.

Pitamakan now assumed command of our section of the party, and signaled us all to join him. We rode up the bottom as rapidly as possible toward the rest of the Gros Ventre party with High Star. They and our herd of horses and the other part of the Assiniboine force had passed out of sight round the cottonwood grove, but the distant boom of many guns informed us that a hot fight was in progress. The Assiniboines we had been driving back now followed us, but without any apparent eagerness; the humiliating whipping their chief had received had demoralized them. Little Otter was riding slowly down the bottom toward the huddled and no doubt frightened group of women and children there awaiting the result of the fight. With a jeering laugh one of the Gros Ventres said that he would not care to be in the man's place when those women learned about the whipping he had received.

Upon rounding the grove we saw the other

combatants about a mile farther on. High Star and his men had joined the young herders and were all driving the band of horses, and at the same time trying to keep back the Assiniboines, who largely outnumbered them. A determined charge by the enemy must have been disastrous to our allies, but it was not in Assiniboine nature to attempt anything so rash. Upon perceiving our approach, High Star halted and sent some of his men ahead to round up the herd and hold it in close to the bank of the river. The Assiniboines also saw us as soon as we passed the grove, and at once moved out on the bottom so that they might not be between two fires; they continued to shoot from long distance, and occasionally hit one of the Gros Ventres or a horse. We soon joined High Star, and a little later the Assiniboines we had held in check reinforced his assailants.

"Chief, we can't go on this way," Pitamakan said to High Star as soon as we came up to him. "We can't keep going on in the night; should we try to do so, the enemy will have us all killed off before morning."

"You speak plain truth," High Star answered. "I was thinking the same thing and was about to propose to you that we go on into the grove up there, where we can easily hold off these coyote people."

With that he gave the order and we moved on, some herding the horses, the rest of us making another attack on the Assiniboines, who again scattered, and retreated before our fire. We arrived in the shelter of the timber without further loss on our side, but the enemy did not fare so well, three more of them tumbling out of saddles that they would never mount again. The Gros Ventres were better armed and better shots than the Assiniboines, many of them owning good rifles. The enemy mostly carried Hudson Bay Company fukes: smooth-bore flintlocks shooting half-ounce balls.

The grove in which we took refuge did not exceed five acres in extent, and on the river side was bounded by a high cut bank which three or four men could easily guard. As the sun was still an hour high, and the Assiniboines made no attempt to approach the timber, we re-

mained together for the time. No one was in a cheerful mood and there was little talking. The loss on our side had been thirteen men and a number of horses. While High Star, Pitamakan and I, and several of the most experienced of the party held a short council, the rest counted up the enemy's loss, and soon reported it to be either twenty-four or twenty-five men, and "one chief turned into a woman."

"How? What do you mean by that?" High Star asked; and when told what Pitamakan had done to the Assiniboine chief he almost went mad with joy, clapping his hands and laughing until the tears streamed down his cheeks and cut furrows in the red paint. "Oh, what news! What news!" he exclaimed when able to speak. "This cut-throat chief, this bragging waylayer, this ambusher of my people, whipped before his warriors! Oh, would n't I like to look on when the women of that camp begin to revile him! Never again will the Little Otter lead a war party, or even go with one."

And then turning to Pitamakan he said, more soberly: "It is no wonder that the Braves

asked you to become a member of their society young as you are. You have in you the making of a great chief. For myself and for my people I say now that you will always find the Gros Ventres your true friends and helpers."

"*Ai! Ai!* That you will," cried all those who had understood their leader's Blackfoot words.

Pitamakan, embarrassed by so much praise, murmured, "It was nothing! You are all too kind!" and for a moment hid his face with a fold of his blanket.

I came to his rescue with the suggestion that we should at once decide upon some plan that would enable us to get safely out of the Assiniboine country; I added that at no time during the day had we been opposed by more than a third of the Assiniboine fighting force, which my uncle, Sleeping Thunder, had told me time and again numbered about a thousand fighting men.

"That is true," High Star exclaimed. "Either the moving camp we saw is only a part of the whole tribe, or the rest of the men are off somewhere on a big raid. Should they

join the party out there to-night not one of us would ever again see the lodges of our people. Come! Think hard, all of you, and let us hear your plans."

This he said in both the Gros Ventre and Blackfoot tongues, after interpreting my little speech. There followed a silence during which Pitamakan suddenly rose and struck off in the timber toward the lower end of the grove. At the same time a dozen or more men of the Assiniboine force left the gathering out in front of us, and rode away down the bottom.

"They are going for food, or more help. Their camp must be pitched close to us," High Star said.

Then, presently, several of the party offered suggestions in answer to High Star's request, but one after another he rejected with a mere negative shake of the head. I did not, of course, understand what they were, and he did not choose to enlighten me.

"What am I good for? Why can't I find some way for us to get out of this?" I said to myself. Then Pitamakan reappeared. By his

quick step and the gleam in his eye, I knew that he had something to say that would be well worth hearing. There was a general stir among the party at his approach; a murmur of approving voices; and on every face an expression of expectancy, of eagerness, to hear what he had to say. Even High Star, experienced warrior that he was, expressed the general feeling of the party as he said, without waiting to be addressed: "Whipper-of-Chiefs, tell us quick what you saw down there! What plan have you for us to get free from these coyotes encircling us?"

"The enemy's camp is pitched at the outer edge of the grove next below here," Pitamakan answered. "Some of the lodges are already set up and smoke is rising from them. As soon as night comes we will, of course, be completely hemmed in here by the enemy. They may, some of them, even attempt to sneak into the timber and stampede the horses. Certain it is that the camp down there will be deserted by all the fighting men, and that their bands of horses will be left to graze at will.

BEGAN TO QUIRT HIM UNMERCIFULLY

"My plan is that you give me fifty men with whom to raid the camp down there. We will round up all the horses we can find, and then by much shooting raise a commotion that will draw off from you the whole force of the enemy. They will rush home to protect their women and children, giving you the chance to get out of here; my advice is, that instead of going up the river valley, as you will be expected to do, you go straight out south on the plain, and then turn westward. I feel sure that the enemy will not find your trail until tomorrow, and then it will be too late for them to overtake you."

"But what about you? How will you get out of here without being seen? What will you do when the enemy come charging back to their camp, where you will be shooting and yelling to attract their attention?"

"We will not all be there when they arrive; only a few of us on horses more swift than any the enemy have. The others will be off with all the bands of loose animals we can find, off on the plain to the south, and heading west-

ward like yourselves. We on the fast horses — they are in our band here — will draw the enemy after us; we will make them think that we have their horses, and they shall not learn that we have n't them until to-morrow's sun shows them their mistake."

"But how will you manage to get out of this grove without being discovered?"

"By way of the river. All along the grove a high cut bank drops straight down into the water. The enemy will not, they cannot, have any guards stationed along it. We will cut a trail in the bank at the center of the grove, cross the river right there, and recross it when opposite the camp below."

"It is a good plan." High Star interpreted it to his men, who all indorsed it.

There was no time to be lost in carrying it into execution. Followed by the ten men whom High Star told off for riders, Pitamakan and I went to our band and caught twelve of our swiftest and most powerful horses, finely trained buffalo runners, every one of them. These we and the men saddled and tied near

the riverbank until they should be wanted. There remained only a few more broken horses in the band, and we lent them to those whose own animals had entirely given out.

As night was now coming on, High Star appointed a guard for the horses, and stationed the rest of his men along the whole outer length of the grove. He cautioned them to lie flat on the ground in good cover, and to shoot at any moving object that came in sight. The last we saw of the Assiniboines in the deepening darkness, they were resting in groups in front of the grove, about four hundred yards out from it. The few whom we had seen riding down toward their camp had long since returned, accompanied by forty or fifty others, all of them old men, as the glass showed. Evidently there was n't a man left in the lodges who was able to shoot — except Little Otter. Time and again Pitamakan, High Star, and I examined the whole force of the enemy with my telescope, and so made sure that he was not there in front of us.

"No doubt he already has on his woman's

dress," High Star exclaimed, and a roar of jeering laughter followed the remark.

Pitamakan and I now went to the cut bank with all our men and began to cut a steep incline in it to the edge of the water. Many of the Gros Ventres carried huge Hudson Bay Company cleaver knives, the blades of them ten inches long, four inches wide, and a third of an inch thick at the back. They were the very thing for gouging up the soft, sandy loam of the cut bank. As fast as this was done, many eager hands pawed and shoved the earth into the river, or gathered it in blankets and threw it to one side of the deepening path. Within a couple of hours the incline was completed, and we were preparing to cross the river, when heavy firing, accompanied by shouts and excited calls and answers, began at the other side of the grove. Some of the Gros Ventres started to go to the aid of High Star and his men, but Pitamakan called them back.

"Your brothers out there can easily take care of themselves," he said, "and now, while all this noise is going on, is the time for us to

get the horses across. Take off your clothes, one of you, and find out how deep the water is. We may have to raft the guns and ammunition over in order to prevent their getting wet."

He had no sooner spoken than one of the young men dashed into the stream, clothes and all. Watching him in the dim starlight, we were all pleased to see that from shore to shore the water in no place came up to his waist. When he returned he said that the bed of the stream was solid. We had feared that there, under the cut bank, we might encounter bad quicksands.

The firing and yelling on the other side of the grove ceased soon after we crossed the river. Pitamakan led us straight out on the plain for a half-mile or more before turning east, and then away below the grove where the camp was pitched, before recrossing. Having arrived on the south side over another good ford, he called a halt and told one of the Blackfoot-speaking men of the party to interpret some last orders.

"This place where we now stand," he said, "is to be our meeting-place, and you riders will leave your horses here with Ah-ta-to-yi, my white brother. I will also leave mine with him, and we will go on foot in search of the herds of the camp. If they are grazing out in the bottom, we will have no trouble to round them all up and drive them to this place; but if they are tied among the lodges of the camp we must work very cautiously and quietly in order to get them out. I don't want any shooting started until I myself start it. Now, do all understand what I have said? Yes? Then tie your horses to the brush here and we will go."

Away they went in the darkness, leaving me alone to guard the horses. I noted the position of the Big Dipper and wondered how far it would swing around before they returned.

An hour elapsed before I heard the welcome thud and rustling of many feet, the occasional soft whack of a lariat end against an animal's side, and the low "Huh! huh! Huh! huh!" of the drivers. Then, presently, a dim, oncoming blotch in the darkness resolved itself into

slow-moving, compact herd of horses; a veri-
able sea of horses that drifted past me on either
de and halted at the edge of the river. Fol-
owing them came five men, each one on an
Assiniboine horse.

"Here I am," I called out. "Come close
nd give me the news."

"We have none," one of them answered in
air Blackfoot. "We found these horses, three
ands of them, grazing far out in the bottom
rom the camp. What the rest of the party is
oing — what success they will have, we can-
ot say."

"You will remain with me?" I asked, and
eceived an affirmative "Ah."

Soon after this others of the party came
tringing back to our rendezvous by twos and
hrees, and in large numbers, each outfit bring-
ng a number of horses. The later comers re-
orted that they had taken those they brought
ight out of the camp, where they had been
ied to stakes close to the lodges of their own-
rs, and that there were still a large number
f horses tied there.

Last of all to return was Pitamakan with three of the Gros Ventres, herding a bunch of about fifty horses.

"You have done well," I exclaimed. "We have been counting persons; forty-seven are with me, and your three make fifty men, the whole number of the party."

"That is good. Everything is happening just as I hoped."

He ordered the Gros Ventres to go on with the horses at once. They had brought their saddles and *pishamores* — buffalo robe saddle pads — and left them with me; there ensued a wild scramble to get them sorted out and cinched on the backs of the horses they had selected to ride. They were all ready for the start in a few minutes.

"Be sure to ride far out on the plain before turning for home," Pitamakan said. "And change horses often. Keep on going, and make no stop to rest or eat before to-morrow night."

They were some time in rounding up the big band of horses, but once started, they drew away from us on the lope. Then we, with our

en Gros Ventres, started to do the last and
ost important part of the night's work.

"Pitamakan! Elder brother! Give me a
romise," I said, as we rode along, side by side.

"I promise, and now what is it?"

"It is that there be no women and chil-
ren killed this night."

"Ha! You know that I am not a killer of
ie helpless — but as to these Gros Ventres,
ell, let's see." Bringing them to a stand, he
equested them not to shoot at the lodges or
any one not shooting at us.

"You mean that we are not to kill any
omen," one of the party exclaimed in a surly
one. "Well, why shouldn't we? Many and
any a one of our women have these Assin-
oine dogs killed or carried off to their
odges."

"That is very true. They have done the
me in their raids against us. But, brothers,
e ask you as a favor to harm no woman or
hild this night."

"Oh! If you put it that way, a favor to you
nd your white brother, why, of course we will

do as you say," came the answer in a more pleasant tone.

Said another of the party in broken Blackfoot: "Women do not count as *coups;* why should we kill the poor things?"

We went on then, and shortly afterward the howling of dogs answering the cry of a wolf apprised us that we were near the enemy's camp.

CHAPTER VI

WE came to a stand near the lower lodges of the camp and Pitamakan gave our Gros Ventres some last nstructions. One he told to go up midway etween the camp and the grove where High tar was hemmed in, there keep guard until e could hear the enemy coming, and then re- urn to us as fast as possible. The others he dvised to keep close to us and follow our ead and actions in every particular.

After giving the lone guard ample time to et to his stand, we rode on until opposite the enter of the camp of several hundred lodges, nd lined up at long rifle range from the earest of them.

"Now! Shoot!" Pitamakan ordered. We ischarged our weapons at an elevation that nsured the flight of the bullets over the camp. The instant the guns boomed, Pitamakan led s to another stand near the upper end of the

camp, all of us hurriedly reloading on the way. We fired again as soon as we came to a halt.

Our first volley roused the whole sleeping camp, and by the time we fired the second one a pandemonium of shrieks, calls, wailing of women and children, scattering shots, and howling of dogs broke loose, a high-keyed, tremendous discord of sound that could be heard for miles in the still night air. Down we went under cover of the darkness, to the lower end of the camp, the thud of our horses' feet drowned in the ever-increasing hysteria of a couple of thousand people and a probably equal number of dogs.

There we fired again; then moved back to our first position and let off another volley, which Pitamakan and I supplemented with the discharge of every cylinder of our six-shooters. Here we were answered by the return fire of at least fifty guns, many more than we had thought remained in the camp. The bullets from some of them droned unpleasantly close by our ears.

"After this we will shoot while on a fast

un," said Pitamakan, and thus subsequent volleys fired by the defenders of the camp were aimed at a place where we had been, and not where we were at the time they pulled triggers.

The cries of the women and children soon ceased, a sure sign that they had fled into the timber back of the camp. Thenceforth the Gros Ventres, and even Pitamakan, fired each time directly at the position of the camp defenders, as revealed by the bursts of fire from their guns; and of course some of the bullets went tearing through the lodges. I do not know how long we kept riding up and down in front of the camp, firing our guns as fast as we could reload them; but I think that I had shot my twentieth round when our Gros Ventre sentinel came flying back to us and cried: "They come! They come! A multitude of men are coming; the pound of their horses' feet is like thunder."

And listening, we also heard it: a steady, deep rumble growing louder and louder, and with it finally the crackling of brittle sage-

brush and greasewood, the thwack of quirts, and the spluttering cough of hard-breathing horses.

"We will go now," said Pitamakan. "Keep close behind me, all of you. And listen: no more shooting all together; instead of that we will keep up an irregular fire, just as we happen each of us to reload, so that the enemy will be unable to form any opinion of our number."

With that he fired in the direction of the swiftly approaching enemy, and away we went down the bottom, first one and then another of us discharging our weapons as he had directed.

It is no laughing matter to be chased in the night by two or three hundred riders, even if you are certain that you are astride a horse that none of them can overtake. There was a terrible menace in the thunder of a thousand hoofs behind us, and I sickened at the thought of what would certainly happen to me if my animal should chance to hit a badger hole and fall.

When passing their camp some of our pursuers had undoubtedly swerved into it for a moment, and learned that their herds were missing; that their best runners had been taken right out from among the lodges. For there presently came to our ears shouted calls and answers, and cries of encouragement, apparently, to the less swift riders, and they all came on with such a burst of speed that we were obliged to increase our pace considerably for a time in order to keep at a safe distance ahead of them. Whenever one of us turned in the saddle and fired back, they answered with a scattering volley of shots.

Pitamakan led us straight to the ford where I had remained during the rounding-up of the enemy's herds. We crossed it on the jump, and then turned northward across the bottom and out on the great plain. After a two- or three-mile run the Assiniboines noticeably slackened their pace. We had some difficulty in bringing our fresh and excited horses down to the same rate of speed. To make them believe that, in the end, they must surely overtake us, we fre-

quently allowed them to come within a distance of three or four hundred yards, always showing our position by the discharge of our rifles.

Hour after hour we went on in this manner, heading ever toward the country of the North Blackfeet, and as time passed we became more and more positive that our pursuers believed we had their herds. That and that alone could account for their sticking so doggedly to our trail. Very impatiently now we began looking to the east for signs of coming day, for we were very tired and hungry, and could hardly keep our eyes open because of so much loss of sleep. But when the morning star began to glow redly, and the first faint, white light began to creep up from the eastern horizon, we threw off our lethargy at once. That would well repay us for the risks we had taken and our arduous work of the night.

The fun came when, a little later in the growing day, the Assiniboines discovered that we were only twelve men; that we had not ahead of us their missing herds; not even a single

loose horse. They came to a stop the moment they perceived how they had been tricked. Some of them humped dejectedly in the saddle, others wearily dismounted and stretched themselves on the ground. There were fully three hundred of them, the whole force that had corralled us in the grove by the river on the day before. After a long-drawn sigh of relief, Pitamakan said, "Yes, they are all there, all whom we fought yesterday, and the Gros Ventres are on a safe trail home with the herds."

Then shaking his rifle at them, his eyes flashing and his whole body quivering with rage, he cried out: "Oh, you murderers of my father! Oh, you dogs! This is but the beginning of your troubles: dearly shall you and yours pay for what you have done before Pitamakan's shadow passes on to the Sand Hills."

For a moment or two his consuming anger and bitter speech held our Gros Ventre allies entranced, and then their mischievous spirits again came uppermost. Springing to the ground, they began their victory song, and danced in time to it, a dance in which every movement

was an insult to the onlooking Assiniboines, for it expressed utter contempt of them and the joy of the conqueror. It was more than the Assiniboines could stand; weary though they were, they slowly climbed on their jaded horses and took the back trail for home. Our Gros Ventres had not yet had enough fun at their expense, and so they mounted and followed them for some distance, still singing the victory song, and taunting them in the sign language: "We have your horse herds. We have killed many of your brothers, and made a woman of your chief. Who are we? Why, Gros Ventres; your always enemies. And one is a Blackfoot. Yes, it was Running Eagle, the Blackfoot, who whipped your chief."

Then, presently, they came back to us, smiling and happy.

"We could n't help telling them a few parting truths," one of them said.

"And now what shall we do?" another asked.

"Eat, and then sleep," Pitamakan replied, and led the way southwestward toward some rolling hills and the far-off Gros Ventre camp.

Up in the breaks of the hills we shot a young cow buffalo, and roasted and ate a lot of the fat meat beside a spring of fairly good water. Then we slept, one after another of us taking turn at the watch. All that day and all the following night we remained there by the spring, resting, sleeping, eating, and when we did start on early the next morning, we were all in high spirits and hoping that something exciting would turn up. Nothing happened, however, and two days later we came in sight of the Gros Ventre lodges; whereupon our friends put on their war clothes, painted their faces, and combed and rebraided their long hair, in order to make a triumphant entry into camp.

Neither Pitamakan nor I took part in this. The Gros Ventres were on ahead of us and made the last four or five hundred yards at breakneck speed, singing the war song and firing their guns. On the near side of the camp the whole tribe was gathered to meet and praise them, and tears of joy streamed down the cheeks of the women as they gave thanks to the sun for the safe return.

It was our own intention to avoid the crowd and go straight to High Star's lodge, but as we swerved off toward the upper end of the camp the people surged out and headed us off. Those who spoke Blackfoot shouted: "Pitamakan! Oh-ho, ah-ha!" "He is come, Pitamakan, the chief, and whipper of chiefs." "He has struck our enemy on the back: he is a chief." "Why is Pitamakan a chief? Because he has turned our greatest enemy into a women."

And so they kept on, crowding so close round us that we could not move for some little time. The reception was enough to turn any young warrior's head, but through it all Pitamakan preserved his always modest, even shy, demeanor, and that still more endeared him to the people.

Nor was I overlooked in all this giving of praise. My name was also shouted on all sides, and one old woman cried over and over again: "The Spotted Robe! Oh-ho, ah-ha! There he is, the young white-Blackfoot. The avenger of our dead, there he sits on his horse, safe returned to us and making glad our hearts."

Quite near us stood High Star, as enthusiastic as any one else in sounding our praise, and when he saw that we had heard enough of it, he made a way for us through the crowd and led us to his lodge.

"I have news for you: your enemy was here in this camp two nights ago," he said, as soon as we were seated on the comfortable couch on either side of him.

"You mean —" Pitamakan began.

"Yes, Long Bear, with his follower, One Horn."

"How were they dressed?" I asked.

"I did not see them. We did not get here until yesterday evening, but that was the first question I asked my woman. She tells me that Long Bear wore a red blanket, the other a white one, and both had cow-leather leggins. They remained for the night in High Bear's lodge, and told him that they were on their way home from an unsuccessful raid into the Crow country."

"Ha! They can lie as well as steal from their own tribe," Pitamakan exclaimed. "With-

out doubt they were the two we saw down in the Assiniboine country."

"What are you going to do to them?" our host asked.

"Nothing, at present. Nothing at all until I can surely prove their guilt. It will then be time to consider their punishment."

High Star next informed us that all the Gros Ventres had arrived safely home with our recovered herd and with the Assiniboine horses, and that one of his sons was herding our band on good feed away above the camp. By actual count our division of the party had taken seven hundred and three horses from the enemy, and High Star had been awaiting our arrival to distribute them among the party, share and share alike.

"We want none of them," said Pitamakan decidedly.

"And you need n't give any to the ten men who were with us; we will take care of them," I added. And so we did, giving each of them five good animals.

"Well, my young brother, we Gros Ventres

owe you much," High Star said to Pitamakan. "Every one in this camp is at this time praising your name. I tell you truly that you, and you alone, saved us there in the grove. And more, I say that you are a better warrior than I am. I only know how to fight; but you can both fight and make wise plans for outwitting the enemy. That is true chieftainship. I predict for you a great future: my medicine tells me that you are to be the leader of your people."

"I don't know about that. My father was a chief. The people all loved him. I just want to be as good a man as he was," said Pitamakan.

The rest of that day and all the evening we had n't a moment that we could call our own; one after another the chiefs and medicine men invited us to a feast in their lodges, and at each place we were obliged to take at least a mouthful of the huge dishes of meats, pemmican, and berries set before us. We wisely took but a mouthful, else we had been "stuffed to the neck with food before half the evening was over," as Pitamakan put it.

Returning to High Star's lodge after one of these feasts, we found waiting for us the old woman who had so lavishly praised me earlier in the day, and at her plaintive appeal that we eat some of the pemmican she had especially prepared for us, we accompanied her to her lodge. We were surprised to find it large, and new, and well furnished.

"I know that you don't want to eat," she said, setting the food before us, "and I did not ask you here just to feast. I asked you to come because you have made my heart glad."

"Ah!" "Ah!" we each politely exclaimed.

"Yes, my heart is glad this day," she continued, "because you two have wiped out many of my enemies and set the whole tribe of them afoot. They shall walk who once rode proudly, and many a woman of them is mourning tonight just as I have mourned these many moons.

"Yes, they have done me terrible wrong, those Assiniboine cut-throats. First, they ambushed my man, my good, loving man, when he was out killing meat for the lodge. Next,

they killed my oldest son; and last, two moons back, another son. But one is left me now, and he is away on the war trail.

"So you see, you, Pitamakan, and you, Spotted Robe, young men chiefs, why my heart is glad this night; as my enemies have done to me, so have you done to them — and more, too. And because you have done this, and made my heart glad, I now give you these things — these with which I had thought never to part."

And with that she began opening the ends of six bright-painted, long-fringed, rawhide cylindrical cases, and finally drew from them two of the most beautiful war suits we had ever seen. The shirts and leggins, of soft, white, perfectly tanned bighorn leather, were fringed with white weasel skins, and embroidered with porcupine quill-work of gorgeous colors and intricate design. The war bonnets were of perfectly matched eagle tail feathers, the stem of each one wrapped with swan's-down colored bright red. With careful and loving touch she spread them out before our admiring eyes, then

refolded and replaced them in the cylinders and silently handed them to us.

"You are very generous," I said, and asked what we could do for her in return for such rich presents.

"Just keep on killing Assiniboines," was her quick reply.

"We will do that whenever we can," Pitamakan fiercely exclaimed. "They ambushed my father, as they did your man."

"Ah! That is the kind of talk I like to hear." Then, after a moment, the old woman gave us the signal to depart, saying: "You may go, now. I think that I am going to cry."

She did. We heard her wailing and calling the names of her dead as we wended our way back to High Star's lodge.

A large party of the Gros Ventres was starting on a trading expedition to Fort Benton the next morning. It was our intention to accompany it, as we would then have help in driving our band of horses. High Star, however, would not hear of our departing for at

least another day, as he had made preparations for a big dance in our honor. Accordingly, we put on the war suits given us by the old woman, and along about three o'clock he escorted us to the edge of the timber below the camp, where about four hundred men were assembled, every one of them dressed in his finest war clothes. As we came near they all shouted: "Ho, Pitamakan! Ho, Ah-ta-to-yi!" and then gave their shrill, staccato, long-drawn war cry, which cannot be expressed in print, or correctly intoned by civilized man.

"Ho, Ut-se-na! Nĭks-o-kwo-i-ăn-on!" (Ho, Gros Ventres! Relatives all!) we shouted in answer to their greeting, and took our place with High Star near the drummers. These were twenty young men in sets of four sitting round five huge, deep-toned rawhide-headed drums which they were to whang with buckskin knobbed sticks — tum *tum!* tum *tum!* tum *tum!* — in time to the dance song.

Upon our arrival our hosts formed a great circle five or six men deep and sat down. Medicine men here and there filled, lighted,

and passed their sacred pipes, so that every one puffed a few whiffs to the sun, to mother earth, and the four quarters of the world. In the center of the circle a number of kettles of food were cooking over small fires, which were in charge of very young men. This was new to us; High Star informed us that we were to have a Crow dance — one that had lately been taught the Gros Ventres by some visitors from the Crow tribe.

As soon as the pipes were smoked out, the twenty young men started the dance song, the deep-toned drums boomed in time to it, and we all rose and began to dance, some moving forward first one foot and then the other with a light and then a heavy step, others dancing with single, long-timed heavy steps, every one meanwhile throwing the body into different postures, and brandishing weapons, all expressive of the conquering warrior. The general movement was an encirclement of the cooking-fires, in imitation of the course of the sun, during which many of the dancers went close round the food kettles, extending their hands

toward them palms outward, as if blessing their contents. The whole tribe was assembled round us in a still larger circle, to watch and enjoy the dance, and under the critical eyes of wife, or mother, or sweetheart, each man did his best to exceed every other man in originality of step and graceful, suggestive posture. It was strenuous work to dance completely round the big circle, and as soon as a turn was completed the young men gave their drums a final rapid beating. Shouting the war cry, we all returned to our starting-places for a short rest.

In this manner the dance was kept up for several hours, and then came the feast, the women passing round the food in dishes that they had brought for that purpose. It seemed to be a stew of some kind of white meat; I poked into mine with a stick and brought to the surface the unmistakable lower jaw of a puppy! "Pitamakan, it is dog meat they have given us!" I whispered, and if my face bore the expression of horror and nausea that his did, then it must have been a sight!

I then remembered having heard that the

Gros Ventres — and the Crows and Assiniboines as well — considered roast or stewed dog the choicest of all meat. The Blackfeet, however, abhorred the very thought of eating it; in fact, to them a dog was a sacred animal, a friend of supernatural sight that could see ghosts of the enemy in the night, and keep them out of the camp.

But here I was with dog meat before me; social custom demanded that I should take at least a mouthful of the soft, white flesh, and I simply could n't do it. What then should I do? I looked again at Pitamakan; between his slightly outspread legs he was pawing a hole in the sandy earth; I took the hint and also pawed a hole, and when none of the Gros Ventres on either side of us were looking, I quietly slipped the stew into it and covered it over with the removed earth.

We left the Gros Ventre camp the next morning, after giving the ten men the horses we had promised them, and presenting to High Star one of our best buffalo runners. Pitamakan was quite downcast upon noting the size of the

band, compared with what it had been; all the long day he was very silent, his face was very stern, and well I knew that he was turning over and over in his mind this and that plan for once and forever making an end of Long Bear, the cause of all this loss.

On the second afternoon out from Milk River we looked down upon Fort Benton from the edge of the plains. Just below it, along the banks of the river, were pitched the lodges of the Blackfeet. At the levee in front of the Fort was a steamboat, and still another was moored to the bank several hundred yards farther up the stream. I did n't know what to make of the latter, and bringing the glass to bear on it I saw that it was not one of our American Fur Company boats. That surprised and disturbed me; we had for some time been expecting — and fearing — the invasion by independent traders of what we considered our territory.

We had decided not to make a spectacular entry into camp, and so slowly herded our horses down the long slope into the bottom,

and across it toward the lodges. But while we were still some distance off we saw the people hurrying out and gathering in front of the nearest ones, and then they came across the flat with a rush to meet us, shouting our names. The more enthusiastic danced forward in a perfect delirium of joy. Our reception by the Gros Ventres was as nothing compared to this. The trading party that had preceded us had told our Blackfeet people all about the fight with the Assiniboines, and how we, or rather Pitamakan, had outwitted them.

We dismounted in the midst of the crowd, and eager boys took charge of our horses. Pitamakan's mother, and his and my Aunt Tsistsaki clung first to one and then the other of us, crying, laughing, kissing, and embracing us, and too overcome to speak. But others were shouting our names, hailing us as "boy chiefs," and madly praising Pitamakan for his *coup* upon the Assiniboine chief. We thought they never would have done. But the welcoming shouts and praise finally subsided and we made our way out of the crowd. A few minutes later

I entered the Fort and shook hands with my uncle.

"Well, well! Here 's my boy safe back again," he exclaimed, drawing me to him and hugging me close.

"You should have been down in camp when he and Pitamakan came in," Tsistsaki cried. "The people shouted their names and praised them until their throats got sore."

"No doubt they did," said Uncle Wesley. "The Gros Ventres who came in yesterday told me something of your adventures with the Assiniboines. Now, then, let 's have the whole thing."

And when I had told him all he looked very grave. "I never before heard of a Blackfoot stealing from his own people," he said, "but there can be no doubt of this Long Bear's guilt. This is a serious matter, my son, and before it is ended it may involve you, and consequently the Company, in a quarrel with some of the Blackfeet. This must be avoided if possible. Yes, in some way this trouble has got to be smoothed over. The boat you no

doubt saw moored above here is loaded with goods for some opposition traders; at this particular time we need to be on better terms than ever with the Blackfeet, and other tribes, in order to hold our trade."

"But listen, Sleeping Thunder. My man, listen," Tsistsaki exclaimed. "You are needlessly getting excited. Our son, here, will have nothing to do with the punishment of Long Bear. That is for Pitamakan to do; it is his privilege; his right. And oh, that it will be done well, none knowing my nephew can doubt."

"And besides, we have n't yet proved, and perhaps never will, that it was Long Bear who stole our horses," I put in.

There our talk ended, for just then my uncle was called to oversee the unloading of our boat, which had arrived that morning.

I spent the rest of the day in our quarters with Tsistsaki, and had a much-needed rest. Just after dark Pitamakan sent for me, and I had no sooner entered his lodge and taken my accustomed seat than he exclaimed: "Long

Bear is here in camp, and already I have sure proof that he and his One Horn follower stole our horses. Now, brother, for vengeance! Now, this night, shall they pay for what they have done to us."

CHAPTER VII

"YOU have the proof that they stole our horses! What is it — how did you get it?" I asked.

"One Horn could n't keep his mouth closed; he talked; he bragged that he and Long Bear had taken our horses and put them where we could never find them. This before the Gros Ventre trading party arrived here and reported that we had recovered the herd and would arrive home to-day."

"They must have been surprised when they got that news," I remarked.

"No doubt they were. And what is more, they have another surprise coming; they don't know that I know what they did. You know Little Wolf, son of Yellow Bird, the widow woman who doctors? One Horn is always trying to be his close friend, and told him that he had helped Long Bear run our horses almost to the mouth of Little River, where the Assiniboines would be sure to find them. Little

Wolf thought he had no right to keep such a thing as that to himself; he came in here a short time before sunset and told me all that One Horn had said."

"Did One Horn give any reason for the stealing of our herd?" I asked.

"Yes. He said that I was always counting false *coups*, you lying for me in the counting of them, so that I could get ahead of Long Bear in the way of becoming chief of the Small Robes band; and so they drove off our herd in order that I might no longer bribe the people to favor me by giving them horses."

"Yes, that was of course his reason for stealing them," I said.

"And now we will go find Long Bear and kill him. One Horn also." Pitamakan picked up his six-shooter and began recapping the nipples of the chambers.

"Oh, no, my son, not that, not that," his mother pleaded, moving to his side and covering the cylinder of the pistol with her hand. "Think what the killing of Long Bear would bring upon us; nothing less than a war within

our tribe; within our very Small Robes band. His relatives would avenge his death by killing you, our relatives would avenge your death, and the result would be — well, you know what it would be: many a lodge of widowed women and fatherless children."

Watching my friend's face, I could see by its change of expression that this view of the matter was having its effect; and so I put in a few words.

"It is not as if we had lost our herd," I argued. "Really, by stealing our horses Long Bear did a good turn for us — for you, especially, for thereby you got the chance to count *coup* on the Assiniboine chief — the greatest *coup* counted by any Blackfoot of our time."

I believed that I had him there, but after a moment's thought his eyes again hardened and he exclaimed: "You talk foolishly, both of you. I say that Long Bear must be punished: for the good of the tribe — to say nothing of what it is our right to do to him."

"But, Pitamakan, brother, listen: there are other punishments besides death, worse even

than death," I said. "Let us, instead of killing him, find some way to make him suffer — to make him ashamed before the people so long as he lives. Anyhow, let us do nothing to him to-night. We will have a good sleep now, and talk about the matter again to-morrow."

"Yes, yes, my son. Heed your friend's, your white brother's, words. As you loved your father — as you love me — promise that you will do nothing to Long Bear this night," his mother urged.

"Nor to-morrow either. Not until we have had a good talk about this," I added.

"Ah! As you both say, so shall it be," Pitamakan agreed.

I returned to the Fort and told my uncle and Tsistsaki what had passed.

"Well done, my boy, you did well in getting him to agree to that," said my uncle. "And now we've got to do some hard thinking to find a way to satisfy your partner, and at the same time prevent bloodshed. Let's all go to bed now, and sleep on the matter."

"Sleeping Thunder, don't you worry about

this," Tsistsaki urged. "You already have enough trouble on your hands. What with these new traders coming in, and a steamboat to load with robes and furs to-morrow, more than enough. Just leave us to manage this trouble. Of course I am only a woman, but for all that I have some sense."

"Ah! That you have," Uncle Wesley agreed.

A few minutes later we were all asleep.

The sun was well up when I awoke the next morning. I hurried to dress and wash, and then found that I was alone in our quarters. There was no hint of breakfast, either, not a pot nor a side of ribs in the fireplace, and by these signs I knew that something unusual was going on. I ran outside, and across the court to the office, and there found my uncle and Tsistsaki, Pitamakan and his mother, Big Lake and all the other chiefs of the tribe, and over in a corner sat Long Bear with his father, and One Horn. Near the doorway was Little Wolf, the young man who had told Pitamakan of One Horn's boast, with his mother. I learned later that the gathering was the result of my uncle's and Big

Lake's order. Late the night before the mother of Little Wolf had gone to him with the tale that One Horn had told her son, and he had first consulted my uncle, and then called the early morning council with the view of settling the trouble before hot heads and angry words could cause more trouble still.

It was not a time for ceremony. No pipe was filled and passed, as is usual in the opening of a council, nor was there any setting-out of food. When I stepped inside, Big Lake had risen and was going the round of the circle, shaking silently the hand of each chief. Then returning to his place, he said very slowly and solemnly: —

"My brothers, and children all, I have called you together here to council with me about a very terrible thing that is charged against young Long Bear, sitting there with his father, and against One Horn, another young man here present. Before I tell you what it is, before we talk about it at all, I want each of you to promise that you will keep your temper."

"As you say, so shall it be." "We promise

that." "We will not get the fire feeling," came ready responses.

Then the old chief continued: —

"Brothers, this is a fearful charge that I have to make against these two young men, Long Bear and One Horn. It is that they stole the horses of Pitamakan and the Fox, drove them almost to the mouth of the Little River, and there turned them loose where they would soon be found by our enemy, the cut-throat Assiniboines."

"*Oh-ho-hai!*" the chiefs all exclaimed, clapping hands to mouth, the expression for extreme surprise.

"It is a lie!" Long Bear declared, glaring contemptuously at Pitamakan and me.

"Why, of course it is a lie," his old father, Wolverine, quavered. "My boy is a good boy; he could not do such a thing. What — steal from one of his own tribe and band? Never! Come! Tell us who makes this charge? Let him make it here before us."

Big Lake turned to Pitamakan at that, and motioned him to speak.

Pitamakan rose, looked his enemy squarely in the eyes, and said: "I make the charge, and I can prove it. Long Bear, with One Horn here to help him, drove our herd almost to the lodges of our cut-throat enemy, camped near the mouth of the Little River. There they abandoned it, on the way dropping out many a sucking colt, which we had to kill. With a party of Gros Ventres we followed the trail of the thieves and our herd, and on the day we finally found the horses and fought with the enemy, we saw two riders traveling toward the west. They rode fresh and powerful animals which our hungry and tired horses could not overtake, else we would be holding no council here to-day. But we did have a far-seeing instrument with us, and through it we recognized the riders —"

"Oh, what a lie that is!" One Horn suddenly exclaimed. "They could n't tell who we were, for we kept our faces concealed."

At that a gasp of astonishment ran round the circle, but no one was so surprised as One Horn himself; he had absent-mindedly spoken his

inmost, secret thought. Instantly there flashed over his face an expression of intense surprise and then of terror, the whole so ludicrous that first my uncle, then Tsistsaki and I, tittered — and then laughed loud and long. Uncle Wesley was so completely overcome with the humor of the situation that he kept on laughing until he choked, and tears ran down his cheeks.

But none of the others laughed. Instead, they sat very quiet and solemn until our merriment had ceased. Later, they would have their fun out of it all, but in council over a grave charge the ancient custom forbade even a smile to break upon their lips.

Meanwhile old Wolverine was staring at his son with an expression of dazed horror.

Long Bear said presently, with a defiant look around: "Another lie! One Horn does not know what he says; he has gone crazy."

Big Horn paid no attention to his further denial, and called upon Little Wolf to repeat what One Horn had confided to him, which he did in detail.

And when he had finished, One Horn broke

down: "Oh, what is the use of keeping this up?" he groaned, turning to Long Bear. "They know that we did it — they have proof enough —"

"Well, then, we did take the horses," Long Bear confessed. "I wanted in some way to get even with this Pitamakan, who has ever been against me — getting ahead of me always by counting false *coups*, even claiming *coups* justly mine. And now I say, here before you all, I will get even with him. There is no place in this tribe for both of us."

"That is true enough; there is no place here for both of us," said Pitamakan. "Go, get your gun and let us determine which of us remains here, and which goes to the Sand Hills."

"No, no, there shall be no fighting," Big Lake said, and all the other chiefs expressed themselves likewise.

"What, then? Are these stealers of our horses to go unpunished?" Pitamakan demanded.

"Punishment they shall have," cried Wol-

verine, springing from his seat with wonderful agility for so old a man. "Leave it to me to punish this person, no longer son of mine."

"Do so, then," Big Lake commanded, and all the other chiefs declared their assent.

The old man slowly turned and silently, sadly, sternly, looked Long Bear in the face. Then, raising his right hand and pointing at him, he exclaimed: "You are no longer my son. You have brought shame upon me and upon our tribe. My lodge is no longer your lodge. Go, get from it the things that are yours, take from our herd the horses that are yours, and this day leave this camp, never to return."

And having finished, the old man moved feebly across the room and took a seat near Big Lake. The bronze color of his face had turned to a ghastly gray, his eyes had taken on a vacant stare, and his hands trembled as he drew his blanket closer round his bent form. Not one of us there but felt the utmost pity for him in his affliction.

Again Big Lake rose, looked sternly at Long

Bear, and was about to speak. But Long Bear got up from his seat, made the sign of contempt for all of us, and with a forced laugh exclaimed: "And so my crazy old father orders me to leave his lodge! That I will do. He orders me to leave this camp. That I will not do. I have friends. I shall not want for a lodge to shelter me. Now, let me pass. I have no time to waste, listening to you old men."

He made no more than three steps toward the door when Big Lake confronted him and roared: "Go back! Sit down and hear our words." And so fierce was the chief's expression, so menacing the alert poise of his tall and strong body, that Long Bear shrank back from him and obeyed the command.

"Brothers," said Big Lake, turning and looking at each of the chiefs, "you heard what our old friend Wolverine ordered this son of his to do. What say you to it?"

"His words are our words," they answered; and I saw my uncle make the sign for approval, whereat Tsistsaki gave him her hand and a happy smile.

Then once again Big Lake faced Long Bear, and said to him in his deep, commanding voice: "Listen! As your father said should be done, so say we. Do not think that you can remain longer than this day among us. I shall send the camp-crier to warn the people that they may not receive you in their lodges, nor give you food, nor shelter, nor help of any kind. Also, I will have the Braves, and other bands of the All Friends, on watch to tear down the lodge and burn the property of any one who gives you aid.

"And now you!" he continued, turning quickly and facing One Horn. "We order that you also leave this camp, and that you remain away from it so long as you live. Go, now, both of you, and be sure to start for wherever you may be minded to go before the setting of this day's sun."

One Horn at once slunk out of the door.

Long Bear stalked across the room, a sneer on his face, his head held high. Pausing at the doorway he turned and said to us: "I am glad that I am no longer a South Blackfoot. I am

glad to be free from such old woman people as you all are. I am now your enemy; you shall learn that to your sorrow."

So ended the council, and one by one the chiefs departed, leaving the four of us in the room.

Tsistsaki said: "Oh, I am happy. This is a good ending of what I feared would be a terrible quarrel within our tribe. I will go now and prepare for you all a good morning meal."

After she had left the room my uncle said to us: "The thing for you boys to do now is to sell your horses to the Company, for you can't prevent Long Bear from stealing them again except by close day-and-night herding, and that will not pay. I will give you a good price for the herd, and send it to one of our down-river posts for sale to the Sioux tribes."

I was glad enough to get rid of my share and accepted his offer at once. But Pitamakan declined very positively to part with even a single horse.

"I love them," he explained. "I love every one of them, big and little; and whenever I

look at them I feel that I am rich. And that is true. Horses are to us Blackfeet what yellow metal pieces are to the white men. No, Sleeping Thunder, I must keep my band, and increase it as I can, if I am ever to become to my people what my father was in his day. As for Long Bear, he will not drive them off again."

Pitamakan spoke more truly than he knew when he said that of his enemy. Long Bear and One Horn left camp that afternoon, driving before them Long Bear's herd of thirty or forty horses, one of the animals packed with their bedding and clothing. They gave out before leaving that they were going to live with the North Blackfeet, up on the Saskatchewan waters; and they took the north trail out of the bottom. Two days later their mangled bodies were found where they had made camp on the Teton, about four miles from the Fort; beside them an Assiniboine *coup* stick was significantly stuck in the ground. When poor old Wolverine was informed of the discovery, he merely said: "It is better so. I can now

rise with the sun and have no fear that the day will bring news further to disgrace me."

So ended Long Bear, and none but his mother shed a tear over his passing. He was about as mean and cold-blooded a savage as ever roamed the plains, — the only Blackfoot I ever knew who did not love and respect his father and mother, nor try in any way to make their old age pleasant.

It was a week or two later that my Uncle Wesley, Pitamakan, and I sat in the upper story of the southwest bastion, the coolest place in the Fort, and looked with no friendly eyes at the opposition traders putting up an adobe structure, and at two more independent steamboats moored to the bank of the river at the upper end of the bottom. Gold, enormously rich placers, had been discovered in the Rockies — where Virginia City was later built — and these boats had come up from St. Louis crowded with men *en route* to the new diggings. We liked them no more than we did the rival traders; they were a disturbing element in what we considered our own buffalo and In-

dian country; and glad we were to see them leave the boats and strike out afoot, and by bull and mule train, on the long, dusty trail to the mountains.

Big Lake, Fox Eyes, and Bull Turns Around came up into the bastion after a time and sat with us. They looked out through the portholes at the snake-like throng of men, teams, and wagons wending their way out of the bottom on the trail to the west. By their actions, by the stern expression of their faces, we knew that they had come to discuss some important matter with us, and presently Big Lake exclaimed: —

"*Oh-ho-hai!* What liars white men are! Of course I do not mean you, Sleeping Thunder, nor your young nephew, here; you both have ever talked to us with straight tongues, and dealt with us in a perfectly honest manner. But the others — and worst of them all, our Grandfather's[1] chiefs — why, their tongues are more crooked than the lightning."

[1] Grandfather: Ka-ahks-an-on. The Blackfoot name for the President of the United States.

"Ah! We hear you. Explain," said Uncle Wesley.

"I will, and quickly. Eight summers ago our Grandfather sent some of his chiefs to make a treaty with us. We all met at the mouth of Yellow River, and what we agreed upon was written on white, square leaf stuff with black water, and signed by us all. The writing said that all the country from the land of the Red Coats south to the Yellowstone River, and from the summit of the Rockies east as far as the mouth of the Yellowstone, was our own Blackfoot country. And further the writing stated that for a steamboat load of goods there and then given us, we would remain at peace with the whites, and allow them to make roads, and travel through our country. To travel through it, mind you. No permission was given them to remain in our country and build houses, and take anything that is ours.[1]

"And now what happens? We have kept our part of the treaty, Sleeping Thunder, but

[1] This was the so-called "Stevens" Treaty of 1855.

the whites have broken their part of it, and proved themselves to be not liars alone, but also thieves. Up there in our mountains they are building themselves hundreds of houses, and taking from the ground great quantities of yellow metal, also ours. Worse still, they are slaughtering our food animals, and trapping our beavers, and other bearers of fine fur. And still they come, hundreds and hundreds of them, to lay waste our country. Well, Sleeping Thunder, we older men are still for peace; we do not wish to break our part of the treaty; — but our young men — their hearts burn with anger at these whites; it may be, my friend, that we cannot control them; and should we fail to do so — oh, what a terrible war would come to pass! My friend, we have come to you for help. Think hard and give us your advice."

"Huh! It turns out just as I expected," my uncle exclaimed in English, and more to himself than to me. "Another fool treaty made — and broken, by those Washington officials; they know about as much of the right way to

handle Indians as does one of those children playing down there by the shore. But much as we dislike those hundreds of tenderfeet yonder, we must never lose sight of the fact that they are our kindred: we 've got to do our best to protect them."

Then, changing to Blackfoot, he said to the chiefs: "Brothers, this is a great country. From his house by the Eastern big-salt-water our Grandfather cannot see nor soon learn what his children are doing in the far parts of it. I am sure that he does not know what is going on here — how many of his white children are pouring into the Blackfeet children's hunting-ground. But he shall learn; I will myself write him all about it, and I doubt not but he will make everything satisfactory to you. This will take time, my brothers. Although my writing will go down-river on the next one of the Company steamboats, we will not hear from our Grandfather until the coming of our boats next summer. Tell that to your young men, and do your utmost to keep them quiet."

"Sleeping Thunder, we knew that you would help us, and you have done so," said Big Lake, springing quickly from his seat. "We will call a council at once, and repeat your words to our fire-hearted young men. I am sure that what you have promised to do will hold them quiet for a time." And with that he and his brother chiefs hastened away to camp.

"Maybe it will hold them, but I doubt it," was my uncle's comment.

"They are very angry, the warriors, both old and young. Some are now talking of making a raid against these whites," said Pitamakan.

"Well, boy, I believe that you have as much influence as the chiefs have with these fire-hearts," Uncle Wesley said. "So you must do all you can to keep them away from the trail to the west."

"I will do my best. Oh, if they could only see, as I have seen, the multitudes of whites there are; if they could only see their thousands of soldiers, their countless cannon, they would never think of making war against them."

A few days after this talk the Blackfeet moved down into the Bear Paw country, Pitamakan going with them. Independent steamboats continued to arrive crowded with passengers for the mines. Most of these travelers brought no supplies of any kind, expecting, no doubt, to be able to step into the corner grocery or the hardware store in the Far West, and purchase what they wanted, just as they had done in their home town or city. They did buy some things of the opposition traders, but we refused to deal with them on any terms, although tobacco, for instance, had gone up to ten dollars a pound, sugar to two dollars, and coffee to six dollars a pound. We were glad to see the opposition sell their stock. Our goods we reserved for the more profitable trade with the Indians during the coming winter.

So the summer passed. In October the Blackfeet and the Bloods both came in to outfit for the winter. They were to camp here and there in the Judith, or, as they called it, the Yellow, River country, where game and fur animals were extremely numerous. My uncle prepared

to send a trading outfit with them in order to buy their furs and robes right on the ground, keep them well supplied with ammunition, and in this way get ahead of the opposition traders, who had no teams and wagons. José Perez was placed in charge of the outfit; for assistants he had two of our *voyageurs* and myself. I was more than glad to winter in the camp and be with Pitamakan again. On the 7th of the month the two tribes crossed the river and struck out for the south. We trailed along behind them with three twelve-horse teams, each drawing two wagons heavily loaded with trade goods.

At Arrow Creek, on the morning of the 9th, we parted with the Bloods for a time. They had decided to hunt and trap along that stream so long as it might be profitable. For once the Blackfoot column was all straggled out that morning. Most of the chiefs and many of the warriors lingered in the Blood camp for a parting feast and smoke with friends and relatives, and the impatient women and remaining men started out on the trail in little

unches as fast as they finished saddling and acking their horses. I helped Pitamakan and is mother get their outfit in shape, and then ve rode on together, driving before us his till large herd of horses. Ahead of us for a nile or more the trail was dotted with widely eparated groups of riders, with their packed nd loose horses, and in this order we approached, at about noon, a small, wooded tream called Wolf Creek.

All the morning I had been oppressed with sense of impending trouble of some kind; n the past these premonitions had more than nce proved true. And so, in a way, I was not t all surprised when, with a grand rush, more han three hundred riders burst out of the valey of the creek and attacked the head of our vell-nigh defenseless column.

CHAPTER VIII

ALL along our line men at once shrilled the rallying call and rode forward to meet the enemy. The women shrieked and prayed to the sun for help as they turned their horses and fled on the back trail with their children. At the head of the column there was wild confusion; the people scattered in all directions like a band of antelope before the onslaught of a wolf-pack. Indeed, they were ravening wolves, those three hundred and more gorgeously costumed, well-mounted, and well-armed red men, chasing and killing, or capturing, as the whim seized them, one after another those whom they pursued.

Pitamakan and I went forward with the rush of men toward the front. The enemy continued to advance toward us, strewing the plain behind them with dead and dying Blackfeet. As we went we shouted to the fugitives to stop, to turn, to take courage, and to face the enemy.

The nearer we came to the enemy, the

greater became our number, man after man taking heart and turning back with us. Finally we were about a hundred and fifty strong. Bull Turns Around and Pitamakan were in the lead, the rest of us close behind. Back of us, at varying distances for at least a mile, were hundreds of men, hurrying to the rescue of their loved ones. Presently, above the thunder of pounding hoofs, rose the shrill war cry of the enemy, and we knew them to be Crows, the largest of all the different tribes with whom the Blackfeet were at war.

"Take courage! Take courage, my children. We must wipe out these Crows," Bull Turns Around shouted.

"*Hai-yu!* Brother Braves! All together now to save the women and the little ones," Pitamakan kept calling back to us who were members of that society.

Gradually quite a following shifted over to his side of the crowd.

Then we came within range of the enemy and opened fire, knocking several of them out of the saddle. At that they split into two par-

ties and swept down on each side of us, delivering a telling fire as they passed. Many of them were armed with the bow, and so, with the bullets, there came a shower of hissing arrows. One of them pierced the neck of a man on my left; I saw him make a grab at it and pitch from his horse.

Men were falling on all sides of me; an arrow pierced the point of my horse's shoulder, and with a squeal of pain he gave a sideways jump that almost unseated me.

Having delivered their fire, the two divisions of the enemy each wheeled in a big circle, came together in front and again bore down on us, presently separating as before. I hate to have to tell it, but a number of the already disheartened Blackfeet turned and fled at their approach. Bull Turns Around was quick to notice this; hurrying to the rear of our force he called, but called in vain, to the deserters to turn back; with threatening whip and bitter words he did prevent a general stampede.

With blood streaming from an arrow wound in his forehead, Pitamakan was at the front,

calling to the Braves to stand their ground with him, to keep cool, and aim to kill. And now he cried out: "I am going to charge to meet his left party of the enemy. Follow me, Braves, else I go alone to my death. You others, there, take courage and meet that party on the right."

At that moment, with a number of others, Fox Eyes, leader of the Braves Society, came pressing to the front. "Go with him, Braves," he shouted, and then called all others to meet the right party of the Crows with himself and Bull Turns Around. Then we started, all shouting the Blackfoot war cry, and calling out to one another words of encouragement. Our sudden change from the defensive to a spirited offensive charge was a surprise to the Crows; when about three hundred yards from us a number of men of both their forces began to rein in their horses, but enough of them came straight on to make their side still by far the stronger when we did meet.

We came together with a shock; horse against horse, rider against rider; empty guns were now used as clubs; bow men were in such close quarters that they could not fit an arrow, and pulled

their knives. At the very start of the scrimmage I got a stinging bow slap in the eye, followed by a knife thrust in my left arm. In spite of the tears that almost blinded me, I managed to give my opponent a rap on the head with clubbed rifle that knocked him out.

I kept close to Pitamakan, and we looked out for one another in the way of preventing attacks from behind. He had wisely reserved the loads in his six-shooter — I had not mine with me that day — for a time of desperate need. The time soon came. Although we all fought hard, and settled the account of many a Crow, we were driven steadily back in the hand-to-hand encounter, with heavy loss; finally men here and there turned from us in open retreat. Pitamakan saw them go, saw, too, that many others were wavering and likely to desert at any moment. He pulled his revolver then and began to empty it, shooting one and another of the leaders of the Crows and at the same time advancing into the very midst of them and calling out: "Take courage, brothers! They are falling back. Now for them!"

WE CAME TOGETHER WITH A SHOCK

They were, indeed, falling back from the deliberate and certain aim of his short gun. Seeing this, the most timid of our party responded to the call as quickly as the bravest. So impetuous was our advance, and so demoralizing to the Crows was Pitamakan's picking-off of their head men, that we soon had them running from us. We chased them only a few hundred yards, then turned to assist Bull Turns Around and Fox Eyes. But by that time they did not need us; with a numerous addition to their party from the rear they also had their opponents on the run.

Like us, they had not the heart to pursue; the time had now come for mourning; for going over the long trail of the fight to take account and care of the dead, and aid the wounded. I had no strength left for this work, and giving Pitamakan the parting sign, I rode back toward our wagon outfit, several miles in the rear. The people were now rapidly pressing to the front, belated chiefs and warriors, anxious-eyed; sobbing women and children, continually halting to ask if I had seen their

missing ones. I did not stop, nor could I answer them with more than a negative sign. I was becoming weak and numb, and upon reaching the wagons fell in a faint into the arms of José Perez. I had lost a lot of blood from the knife cut in my arm.

I regained consciousness to find José washing my wound; he put on some marrow grease and bound it with a strip from one of my shirts. Then the men laid me on a pile of bedding in one of the wagons and started up the teams. I could not see out from where I lay, because of the canvas cover of the wagon drawn tightly over the bows, but I could hear only too plainly the mourning of the people all along the line of the Crows' attack. The wailing of the women and children over their dead was terribly gruesome; more depressing still the deep, hoarse sobbing of grown men.

We went into camp on Wolf Creek; and what a camp it was! Some families had no lodge to put up; here and there stood gentle old horses waiting for hands to unpack them that were cold in death; and all round us lay

people face down on the grass, so overcome by their experience of the day that they had not the heart to go about their evening tasks. Then, presently, on horseback and lashed on *travois*, the dead and wounded were brought in, and louder than ever rose the wails of the mourners. Our two French *voyageurs* went about their work with trembling hands and blanched faces.

"Let us start back for the Fort under cover of the night," they begged José. "We have families. We do not wish to die and leave them unprovided for."

"Huh! It is your own cowardly carcasses you are thinking of. Fools! There is no danger; unharness your teams, *poco pronto!*" he angrily replied.

But all the same, they did desert us in the night — and later were tried and whipped at the Fort, and docked three months' wages.

The Bloods all came trailing into the bottom late that afternoon, set up their lodges beside our camp, and did everything they possibly could to aid their bereaved and suffering kin. Pita-

makan and his mother gathered into their lodge as many widows and orphans as it would hold, and fed all who would eat. Later on, having made the rounds with the chiefs to take account of the losses, he came to our lodge to pass the night with me. He had not taken the time to wash the gash in his forehead; with blood caked all down his cheeks and round the eyes he was a fearsome sight. I placed a basin of water before him, and when he had used it, urged him to eat.

"I can't do it," he exclaimed, setting the meat to one side, "and you could n't either if you had seen what I have in our rounds of the camp. What has happened to us is beyond words to express. Listen. According to our count we have here in camp the bodies of ninety-one women, one hundred and thirteen men, and eighteen children. Wounded, some of them dying, eleven men and four women. And there are missing twenty-two married women, thirty-eight girls, and nine young children, captured by the enemy."

"Yes. And who is to blame for it all?"

José fiercely exclaimed. "None but your smoke and feast-loving chiefs. Did they send scouts out ahead last night — or even this morning? No. Did they even see that there was a strong guard at the head of the column when camp was broken? No. Every one of them except Bull Turns Around remained in the Blood lodges feasting and passing the pipe and telling stories, and by their carelessness allowed all this to happen. Oh, I know what they thought; it was: 'We are the Blackfeet, the Only People. We are the most numerous, most powerful, most brave of all the tribes of the plains. None of them dare attack our moving column!' Ha! Huh! That is what they thought, Pitamakan, my son."

But to that Pitamakan made no reply except to say: "What has happened has happened. It will be a lesson to us that we will never forget."

Other visitors to our lodge that evening were not so conservative, however; one and all of them freely blamed the chiefs, and especially Big Lake, for the terrible massacre.

"Well, the Crows paid for what they did; we count *coup* on sixty-seven of them," said one, complacently rubbing the palms of his hands together.

"Ha! A hundred Crow lives are not worth one Blackfoot life," another bitterly exclaimed.

"They were hard enough to take, those we did get," said Fox Eyes. "And there would have been many more Blackfeet dead, and many less Crows killed, had it not been for Pitamakan here. Tell us, brother Brave, how many did you kill?"

"Nine. But I had a six-shot short gun, you know. Without that I would have counted no more *coups* than any of the others."

"Yes. He had it, and he saved the shots for just the right time. Had he not used it when he did, the Crows would have killed the most of our party."

To this there were loud cries of: "Ah! The truth!" And for many a day, I heard high praise of Pitamakan.

Late in the night two women came into the

camp and gladdened the hearts of their men, who were mourning them as forever lost. They had been captured by the Crows, and reported that the enemy had with them the number of women and children tallying with our count of the missing, and a very large band of our horses, some of them packed with lodges and all kinds of valuable property. The two had made their escape by simply turning off from the trail into the thick willows at the crossing of Warm Spring Creek, and remaining hidden until the whole party had passed.

On the following morning there were more terribly sad scenes during the sepulture of the dead in the trees up and down the creek. Camp was then broken and a move made over a divide to the Judith, where the lodges were set up at the mouth of Warm Spring Creek. A strong guard of the Braves remained with our teams and wagons until José and I got them one by one across to the new camp. From here we sent a messenger back to the Fort with news of the massacre, and a request

for men to take the place of the two *voyageurs* who had deserted us.

Expecting to make a long stay in this place, José and I, with the assistance of Pitamakan's mother, fixed the interior of our lodge in comfortable shape. Then I went fishing. I had a hook and line used for catching catfish in the river at Fort Benton; attaching this to a willow stick, and baiting with a piece of buffalo meat, I yanked four large cut-throat trout out of a deep pool, one after another, as fast as I could rebait the hook. The smallest of them was over a pound in weight.

That evening I made preparations for a grand feast. I set the Dutch oven on the coals, put into it a quantity of our best marrow grease, and when that was hot, three of the nicely cleaned and salted trout; lastly I put on the heavy cast-iron lid of the oven, covered with live coals. Soon afterward old Red Eagle, a medicine man, and several others came into the lodge to smoke and talk with José. About the time the pipe was lighted and going the rounds, the odor of my frying fish began to

ermeate the atmosphere. Red Eagle was the rst to notice it. I could see him sniffing, and niffing, and finally he exclaimed: —

"Ha! Something good is cooking here. The smell of it is strange to me. What is it, Young Fox, that you have there in the pot?"

"Spotted fish. Beautiful spotted fish that I aught in the river," I replied.

"Oh, oh! Spotted fish!" The expression of is face showed his terror and disgust. "Spotted sh! Forbidden food! Food of the dread Un-er-Water People. Boy, bad luck may come o you for this. Come to my lodge to-morrow norning and I will pray for you. In the mean ime, go straight to the river and empty the sh into it. Give them back to those whose ood they are."

And with that he went hastily out of the odge, followed by his friends.

José and I ate the fish and enjoyed them.

The next day at about noon Red Eagle sent or me, and with some reluctance I went to is lodge. "I have been waiting for you," he id.

"I did not come because I ate the fish," truthfully explained.

And at the words the old man put up hi hands as if to ward off a blow, and said: —

"You know, boy, that I think a great dea of you. For that reason, what you have don makes me very uneasy. And then — there' Tsistsaki, your aunt-mother: I promised he to look out for you. Well, we will try to und what you have done. Go to your lodge at once get something of value for a sacrifice, and the accompany me to the river."

I saw at once that to keep his friendshi and preserve my standing as a member of th tribe I must do what he ordered; and so, t do the thing in a manner that would show m evidently deep repentance for my sin, I go out the handsome shield I had taken from th Crow upon whom I had counted a *coup* th day of the massacre, and soon stood beside hir at the edge of the river. A big crowd of men women, and children gathered behind us.

"What is it — what are they going to do? I heard some of them asking.

"It is the Fox; he caught and ate forbidden food: spotted fish of the river."

Murmurs of surprise, groans of disapproval greeted this information, and then there fell a deep silence as the old man began his prayer: "*Hai-yu*, Sun! *Hai-yu*, all Above People. Have pity on us: give us all, men, women, and children, long life, and abundant food and shelter. *Hai-yu*, Under-Water People, you of the deep, dark places: have pity on us. Have pity on this youth, the Fox. He took from you that which was yours: spotted fish, your food. But now he makes sacrifice to you: he gives you a shield, a beautiful shield. Accept it in payment for what he did, we pray you."

Then, turning and whispering it close to my ear, he told me what to do—and say. I tossed the shield into the water and exclaimed: "*Hai-yu*, Under-Water People. I knew not what I did, so have pity on me. I give you this shield. Allow me ever safely to cross all your deep, dark waters. Have pity on me."

"*Ai! Ai!* Have pity on him," Red Eagle concluded; and the ceremony was over.

The crowd dispersed and I returned to our lodge with the old man, and gave him a plug of tobacco for what he had done for me. He went home with the firm conviction that he had saved me from certain death at the hands of the Under-Water People. I could now safely cross any of their streams, he said.

Within a few days after going into camp on the Judith two men came out from the Fort, to take the place of the Frenchmen who had deserted us, and I was then free to go hunting and trapping with Pitamakan. Nowhere else in the whole Northwest was game so plentiful as in this section. Buffalo and antelope literally covered the plains; deer and elk swarmed on the mountain-sides; and on the bare, rocky peaks were any number of bighorn. Both beavers and otters were numerous along the river and all its little tributaries; wolves by the thousands fattened on the herds, and bears, both grizzly and black, could be seen almost every day along the foothills and the edge of the plain.

Pitamakan and I stayed out of camp as much

s we could, for it was now a far from cheer-
ul place. The people mourned for their dead,
killed in the Crow massacre, and for that mat-
er continued to do so all the winter long.
There was no dancing, no amusement of any
kind; no story-telling round the evening lodge
ires. But night after night there were meet-
ngs of old men, gatherings of young men, at
vhich plans of vengeance were discussed.

One of the interesting characters in the ad-
oining Blood camp was a man named Prairie
Chicken Child. When only a baby he and his
nother had been captured by the Crows. Dur-
ng twenty years succeeding their capture the
nother tried many times to escape with her
on and rejoin her tribe, but in vain. The boy,
lone, could have succeeded, but he would not
part from her, and so remained with the Crows
ntil her death. Then he slipped out of camp
one night, and after various adventures reached
Fort Benton and his own people, who were
camping there at the time. From that day he
became one of the bitterest enemies of the
Crows, and made raids on them exclusively,

sometimes as the leader of a war party, but more often alone.

Prairie Chicken Child passed the greater part of his time in our camp now, continually recounting the victories of the Crows over the Blackfeet, and urging the formation of a war party from both camps, large enough to overwhelm the enemy. One evening he came into Big Lake's lodge while Pitamakan and I were visiting there with a number of the Braves Society, and at once began to urge the acceptance of his plan.

"Just think what you have to avenge," he cried. "Not only this terrible massacre of your loved ones, but that other one — ah! You have heard about it! But let me tell you just how it was. My mother and I were there; in plain sight from where we watched, our own people were struck down, and we powerless to give them aid of any kind.

"We were camped on the Big Horn, both the River and the Mountain tribes of the Crows. At daybreak one morning some early hunters discovered the Blackfoot war party, roused the

amp, and before the charge of a thousand war-iors our people took refuge on a high, flat rock f great size rising from the level of the river ottom. From the very first they knew that ney would never get away from there alive; nat they must either die from hunger and nirst or at the hands of their besiegers. Did ney show faint heart? No. For two days those inety-two Blackfoot warriors stood on the dge of the big, round, flat rock and sang their ar song, taunted the Crows, dared them to ome up and fight.

"Toward the close of the second day they ere noticeably weakening; their songs and nouts became not near so loud, and they danced ith more and more feeble step. On the third ay they were still weaker; they still sang, and ared the enemy, saying in signs: 'We are less nan one hundred, you are as many as the grass lades of the plains: why don't you come up nd fight us?' But now their voices were very int, and so weak were they that they could ance no more.

"Still the Crows sat round the great rock,

waiting and waiting. Oh, the cowards! And then when the sun was near setting they said: 'The Blackfoot dogs cannot bite now; come, let us go up and finish them.'

"Up they went then, the whole force of the two Crow tribes, charging all sides of the rock at once. But the 'dogs' still *could* bite. Oh, how they did fight, my friends, some there on the rock, others rushing from it into the thick of the enemy below, and cutting and thrusting with their knives to the very end! They were very weak; their end came quickly; but there was mourning in the Crow camp that night.

"But the next day! To my mother and me, that was the worst of all. We had to sit and listen to the Crows singing and dancing with ninety-one scalps of our kindred! Right then I promised my mother that as soon as I could I would devote my life to making them pay for that. I have kept my word. I have done what I can. And now I say to you: Come, let us all set out for the Crow camps and completely destroy them."

"You talk as if the Crows had ever been

victors over us," said Big Lake, somewhat testily. He was aware of the criticism of him for not having had a strong guard out ahead, on the morning we left Arrow Creek. "Why, except for these two occasions, we have worsted them in every battle. Did they not own all this great country once? From the southern tributaries of the Yellowstone, north to the Little River, they claimed the plains and mountains as their hunting-ground. But our great-grandfathers drove them out of it; drove them south across the Yellowstone, and ever since that time we have kept them there."

"*Ai!* True enough," Prairie Chicken Child replied. "But with the years more of them have been born than we have killed. They grow stronger and stronger; are already invading our country. This last great success of theirs will give them heart to attempt still bigger raids upon us. Now is the time, I say, to destroy them."

"No, it is not," Big Lake objected. "We chiefs counciled about it this morning and agreed that it is not a proper time to attempt

this. First, because to wipe out the two Crow tribes without serious loss to ourselves, we need the aid of the North Blackfeet, and they are wintering away up on the Saskatchewan. Second, because a raid to the Yellowstone and beyond would use up our fast horses. We have to keep them strong for running buffalo this coming winter, else our women and children will suffer from want of food and warm clothing."

Without another word Prairie Chicken Child wrapped his robe close round his tall, spare form, and left the lodge.

"He feels very badly, but I can't help it," said Big Lake. "This is not the time to take revenge upon our southern enemy."

The next evening, in the Braves' lodge, we heard the Blood talk bitterly about his failure to rouse the chiefs of the two camps to an immediate raid against the Crows. "And think, brothers, think of our women and young girls," he concluded, "captives there in the lodges of the enemy, and crying night and day to be rescued! Well, as the chiefs will do nothing,

I shall go alone and try to bring some of them, at least, back to those here who are mourning for them."

"You need not start out alone," said Pitamakan. "I will go with you."

"And I, too," shouted a number of the Braves.

Fired to enthusiasm by the Blood's closing words, I said that I would make one of the party.

CHAPTER IX

I WISH that I could go with you, but this wound in the leg I got in the fight the other day will keep me here in the lodge for a long time," said Fox Eyes. "But as this is to be a Braves' war party, I have something to say about it: I propose that Pitamakan shall take my place as your leader."

"I have never led a war party," Pitamakan objected.

"But you can." "You will now." "You are the one to lead us." "We know your record." Thus spoke the Braves, and he modestly accepted the honor by answering: "As you say, so shall it be. I will do the best I can."

Fox Eyes at once had our camp-crier go through both camps to announce the formation of a war party against the Crows, and to summon all who would join it to be ready to start from his lodge the following evening. When that time came we found more than two hundred well-mounted riders at the starting-place,

all young men with the exception of the husbands and fathers of the women and girls whom the Crows had captured. Every one of these mourners was present, eager to take the trail.

Looking the crowd over from the edge of it, Pitamakan said to me: "Fox Eyes meant well, but he has made a mistake. I am too young and inexperienced to lead this great body of men, many of them old enough to be my father. I will go now and tell him to name some one else in my place."

"You will do no such thing," I said. "Show me a man here who has traveled as far and fought as many different peoples as you have. You don't seem to know what a name you have, what confidence the people have in you. And, anyhow, it is too late now for you to back out; that would be thought a bad omen, and the party would disband right here."

"*Ai;* that last is true enough; I did n't think of it. That would break up the party and I would be called a coward. *Hai-yu*, Above People! *Hai-yu*, my secret helper! Have pity on me! Give me success on this trail of war," he

cried, and gave the signal for us to start, himself taking the lead.

We traveled steadily all night; we arrived at the Mussel-shell River, and camped in a fine grove of cottonwoods shortly after daylight. Pitamakan at once called off the names of those he wished to stand watch, turn about, during the day,—an unusually large number of men. Then, after a hasty meal of dry food, we all stretched out for a much-needed rest. As Pitamakan was not the owner of a sacred pipe, or, in other words, was not a medicine man, a Blood warrior named Ancient Weasel acted as our spiritual adviser. By his dreams, his visions, he was believed to be able to interpret what the future held in store for us.

On this day Ancient Weasel awoke about three o'clock, and coming from his retreat off to one side of the crowd of sleepers, informed Pitamakan that his dream could not have been better: he, his spirit, or, more properly, his shadow, had gone forth on a hunt for meat, and after a successful day was returning to camp, when a large war party came riding from the

plains and down past him, singing the victory song, waving many fresh scalps, and shouting that they had vanquished the enemy. They had been too far away for him to see their faces plainly, but he believed that they were none other than the men of our own tribe.

If some of those present were already regretting that they had started out on the expedition, they changed their minds upon hearing Ancient Weasel tell his dream. Looking about at the whole crowd I could not see a single solemn face among them; now confident of success, they were eager to press on. Pitamakan, even, was smiling and joking with some of those sitting near him. Later, however, when we strolled together to the river for water, he became sober-faced enough as he said:—

"Yes, Ancient Weasel's dream was a good one, but it is I who have to make it come true. All last night, and again all this day as I lay half-asleep and half-awake, I tried to think out some way to do what we have set out to do, and I failed."

"But you will find a way. And, besides, you

have plenty of time in which to make your plans," I said.

"Time! Why, two more rides will take us to the Yellowstone. We may find the Crows encamped right there."

Upon returning from the river, I sat down beside Ancient Weasel and asked him to give me the history of his medicine pipe.

"Hush!" he answered, and made the sign for silence. "You know well enough that this is not a time to talk about the gods."

It was true. I had, for the moment, forgotten the belief that those who spoke about the ancient ones while the sun was in the sky would be stricken with blindness. Only after nightfall could their marvelous adventures be safely recounted.

Soon after we had resumed the trail, Ancient Weasel rode up beside me in the bright moonlight. "Now, younger brother, you shall know the history of my medicine, my sacred pipe," he said, and straightway began the story.

"It was in the long ago, soon after Old Man had made the first Blackfeet, and they were

still like little children, not knowing which way to turn for help when trouble came upon them.

"One day two brothers went out to hunt, and after wandering round a long time, they at last got near enough to an elk to kill it with bow and arrows.

"'It is fine meat; our women and children will be happy when they see us coming in with all we can carry of it,' said one of the brothers.

"'We will take light loads now, and come back for big loads of it after we have satisfied our hunger,' said the other.

"But they had no more than started for their lodges when they saw a party of strange men running toward them from the near-by timber; dropping their meat they also ran. One of them had been sick and was still quite weak, and him the strange men soon overtook and killed. The other easily outran the pursuers and safely reached camp. There he told what had happened, and all the men of the camp went back with him to give battle to the

strangers, but all they found was the dead body of the weak brother. The enemy had disappeared and left no trail.

"From that day the elder brother mourned and could take no comfort anywhere, not even in his own lodge with his woman and children. He wanted to avenge the death of his brother, and knew not how to go about it. Day after day he wandered this way and that from camp, thinking and thinking about this until he almost went crazy. Then one day, as he wandered along the shore of a river, he heard strange, far-off, sweet singing — a beautiful song; and after looking all round, he at last found that the song came from a hole in the lower edge of a cut bank near which he was standing. 'Although I die for it, I have to see who is singing this fine, strange song,' he said to himself; and kneeling down began to crawl into the hole.

"It was very dark in there, but as he kept crawling on and on, the singing grew louder and louder; and after a while he came to the end of the hole and to the edge of a big, round

space like a lodge, into which the sun was shining through an opening in the earth above the roof. And as soon as his eyes became accustomed to the bright light he saw that beavers were the singers; a great gathering of beavers sitting round on fine couches. He saw, too, that all the unused spaces of the lodge were filled — and the walls hung with great quantities of rich property: beautiful garments, fine weapons and shields, wonderful embroideries of colored porcupine quills on whitest buckskin, and many other things the like of which he had never seen before.

"Right opposite him sat a very large, old beaver, so old that his fur had turned white. But his eyes were bright enough, and his actions were those of youth as he led the singing, and beat a fine-tone drum in time to it.

"Presently the song ended, and then the old beaver said to him: 'Welcome, fire-making animal. Welcome. You are here in the home of the beavers. I am the beaver chief, and just as you came I was teaching some of my children our medicine songs. Come. Sit

beside me and tell me your troubles; I know you have some; it may be that I can help you.'

"'My troubles are many,' the man said. 'The enemy killed my brother, and I cannot find them. My people get sick and die because we know not what to do to make them well.'

"'How about the nights: when you sleep do you have visions — that is, does your shadow leave your body then and go forth seeking knowledge?'

"'No, I know nothing about such a thing,' the man answered.

"'Well, you shall know. I will help you to know,' said the beaver. 'The Old Man, the Sun and other Above People give the power to dream, to see visions, but one has to sacrifice to them, to pray to them, in order to get it. Now I am going to give you this sacred pipe. When in need, when you want the help of the gods, take it out and smoke to them, and pray, and they will help you.'

"The old beaver then taught the man how

o unwrap the pipe, what songs to sing for ach separate wrapping, and how to hold the ipe when praying. Four days the man stayed here in the beaver lodge learning these things, ntil he had the whole ceremony and the songs erfect, and then he took the pipe and went ome. From that time all was well with him. He had dreams — good ones, showing that success would be his — bad ones, warning him to ive up that which he proposed doing. And rst of all he found the enemy and avenged he death of his brother."

"It is a very old pipe," I said.

"One of the most ancient in the whole Blackfoot Nation, and very valuable. I myself ave fifty horses for it."

"Well, tell me one thing," I asked. "These reams — these visions you get through the nedicine of the pipe — do things always turn ut as indicated?"

"Not always," he reluctantly admitted, but those few times through my own fault — ecause of something I had done that offended he gods. Try as we will none of us can help

now and then doing something that displeases them."

When morning broke we found ourselves on top of a high, and in places pine-timbered, divide between the Musselshell and the Yellowstone, and not more than fifteen or twenty miles from the latter stream. We went into a large grove, where there was a good spring of water and plenty of feed for the horses. After unsaddling, Pitamakan called us all together for instructions.

"I am going to send a couple of scouts ahead to locate the Crow lodges," he said. "They will be gone several days, and while awaiting their return we will build some war houses in which to shield the fires, and make ourselves as comfortable as possible. In the late part of the day, if the watchers see no signs of the enemy anywhere, some of you will hunt in the pine groves and kill a few elk. Now, who wants to go ahead and find the Crows for us?"

By the answering shout to the question it seemed that every member of the party was

anxious for this honor. Then Prairie Chicken Child cried out: "I am the one to go. I grew up in that country off there. I know the Crow trails, and where they camp and hunt at different seasons. Of course I am the one to go."

"Right you are," Pitamakan agreed. "You will start as soon as night falls, and you shall choose the one of us whom you want for a partner."

Watchers were sent out to the top of different buttes surrounding the grove. Then we all slept for a time. After that, with dead poles, sticks, and pine boughs we put up the "war houses," as the early *voyageurs* of the Hudson Bay Company named the conical shelters. Pitamakan, Ancient Weasel, and I had a small one to ourselves; the rest were larger and occupied by a dozen or more men each. By three o'clock, since the watchers reported the whole country quiet, a number of the party set out to hunt, and killed seventeen elk before sundown. Fires were then started in the war houses and we all broiled and ate our fill of the fat meat. Prairie Chicken Child soon after-

ward set out on his hunt for the Crow camp, accompanied by a young man of his tribe named Mi-sin-ski (Striped Face, the Badger). The two were close friends and had often been on raids together.

And now began for us a time of more or less impatient waiting. We slept, and ate largely of fat elk meat; stood watch by turns, and restlessly loafed in the timber. I, myself, did more than my share of watch duty, for I never tired of sitting on a high point and looking off at the limitless brown plains, the far blue mountain ranges, and the nearer flat-topped, pine-clad buttes. It was all on so grand a scale, that wilderness, and apparently so peaceful! Near and far countless herds of buffalo and antelope grazed on the rich, dry, sun-cured grasses, or lay in restful sleep, or moved to their watering-places in single column, — mile-long files, — along deep-worn trails that their ancestors had trodden for countless years, perhaps centuries.

Yes, peaceful the country appeared, but along the deep-worn trails the wolf-packs lay in wait for stragglers of the herds; and down in the

pine grove below me lurked a pack of more than two hundred human wolves, bent upon a mission of death to their kind.

"I am myself a savage," I admitted to the war eagle circling above me one bright morning, itself hungrily watching a community of prairie dogs below. And I was. I gloried in that great wilderness of plains and mountains and its elemental life.

Three days passed and we began to look for the return of our scouts. Passed the fourth, the fifth, and even the sixth day with no signs of them, and we began to worry; to think that we should never see them again. Came the seventh day, and the morning, and then the afternoon watchers reported the game herds everywhere quiet, and no riders anywhere in sight.

"It is time for me to make medicine," said Ancient Weasel. And in the evening, in our little war house he got out his sacred roll and laid it on the ground at his left.

Then he drew a live coal a little way out from the fire, and laid upon it a pinch of sweet grass that he took from a red-painted, small

buckskin sack. Smoke at once rose from the smouldering grass, a thin, blue column of pungent perfume, in which he rubbed his hands, thus purifying himself before opening the medicine.

The roll was about three feet long and eight or ten inches in diameter. The outer covering of it was red-dyed buckskin, tied at the ends and in the middle with red buckskin strings. These he untied; then opening out both ways the covering, he revealed another covering, or wrapper of snow-white buckskin. Before opening it out flat, like the outer covering, he sang very slowly and very low, the beaver song, prefacing it with the appeal: "*Hai-yu*, ancient cutters-of-wood! Have pity on me."

Having finished the song, he opened out the wrapping and exposed still another of buckskin, over which he sang the buffalo song; the song of food and shelter; and then another wrapper, over which he sang the antelope song; and, lastly, a fourth wrapper was spread out after he sang the wolf song, the song of the hunter. Then the medicine lay revealed. It was a

highly polished wooden pipestem, beautifully decorated at intervals along its length with feathers of different colors, bands of dyed porcupine quill-work, tufts of fur, and strands of a scalp-lock.

After again purifying his hands with sweetgrass smoke, Ancient Weasel reached over three different times to lift the stem, and three times drew back; the fourth time he gently, reverently, laid hands on the stem and slowly raised it until the mouthpiece end pointed up at the sky. Then he prayed: "*Hai-yu*, Sun! *Hai-yu*, Old Man! *Hai-yu*, all Above People! I have purified myself with your own sacred perfume, and now with this Beaver Medicine Pipe we will smoke to you. Have pity upon us. Give us all long life, good health, and happiness. Give me this night a dream. Allow me to see what is before us. Have pity. Allow us to survive all dangers."

He lowered the stem, fitted to it a large black stone pipe-bowl already filled with tobacco and herbs, lit the fragrant mixture, and then, blowing great puffs of smoke skyward,

and to the ground, prayed again for a dream. Lastly, he handed the pipe to Pitamakan, who made a short, inaudible prayer, and then I took it, and prayed, and passed it back to the owner. He smoked it out. "There. We have smoked, and prayed," he said, "and I am certain that the gods have heard us. Now, then, for sleep and dreams."

In the gray light of breaking day Ancient Weasel awakened us by crying out: "Arise, my young brothers. Arise! All is wrong with us. I have had a vision. Call all the sleepers that they also may hear it."

But so impatient was he with our leisurely answer to his call that he went out, and round to each little war house, notifying the occupants to gather and hear his dream.

With the exception of the five or six men on watch, every one was soon ready to hear it. We sat in a close half circle in front of one of the war houses, close wrapped in our blankets and robes, for the morning was frosty. No one spoke. On every face there was an anxious expression. Ancient Weasel, pacing up and down

before us, was rubbing his hands together, muttering to himself, and frequently shaking his head.

"Well?" some one impatiently exclaimed. "Well? Come. Let us hear. Why keep us anxious and freezing here?"

Ancient Weasel stopped short then, and exclaimed: "Listen, my brothers all. Last night I made medicine. I asked for a dream; for a sign to guide us, and the gods listened to my prayers. I had a dream. While my body lay quiet, I, my shadow, went out on discovery. I traveled far across a great plain and came to a wide, deep river. 'I must cross it,' I said to myself, 'for without doubt the Crows are camped somewhere beyond and I have to locate them.'

"So I looked round for material for a raft, upon which to keep my weapons and clothing dry, and soon found a large pile of driftwood. I was just pulling out a good piece from it when I heard some one call my name. Oh, how I jumped, and looked all round, but nowhere was there any one in sight. 'It was a

mistake. I just imagined that I heard some one call me,' I said, and started again to drag the wood to the water, when again my name was called. There was no doubt about it this time, and, looking in the direction whence came the sound, — brothers, imagine my surprise when I saw that he who called to me was a big white beaver! There he sat at the edge of the water, straight up on his haunches and supporting his tail, and with his little fore paws he beckoned me to come near.

"I dropped the stick and started toward him, but none too fast, brothers, you may be sure. I knew him for what he was: the Ancient Beaver himself. A god. And the gods, even the least of them, as we all know, have dreadful powers. So I stopped at what I thought a respectful distance from him, and knowing not what to say, stood silent.

"Then said Ancient Beaver, 'Do not fear me. I am your medicine. It was I who, in the long ago, gave one of your ancestors my sacred pipe — the one you now have — and taught him my medicine songs.'

"'Yes,' said I, 'yes.' And knowing not what o do, I waited to hear more.

"'You have been praying to me. To me nd the Above Gods. You asked for help; for vision. Well, I am your vision. I have but ne thing to tell you, and that is, turn back. ou, and your brothers over there in the pines, ake your back trail at once and return to your odges, for the trail ahead has a quick ending, nd the end is death to you all.'"

Upon hearing this, every one in the party ave an involuntary start and an exclamation f surprise or disappointment; then came sharp emands for the rest of the vision.

"Yes, that is what he said," Ancient Weasel ontinued; "and then I asked him what was hat danger.

"'That you may not know. There are some hings that we gods must for certain reasons eep to ourselves,' he replied; and without anther word he turned and dived into the river, itting the water a loud spat with his big, road tail, and I saw him no more. It was then awoke, and called you all to hear what he

said. Myself, I take his warning, and I advise you all to do the same."

"*Ai!* We can't start back too soon," some one exclaimed; and there followed a general scattering of the party to the war houses for their weapons, and here and there into the timber for their horses.

"Let us go and cook some ribs," Pitamakan said to me; and by that I knew that he did not intend to heed Ancient Weasel's vision.

"What!" Ancient Weasel exclaimed, as he came into the war house a little later. "Roasting meat? You had better hurry; almost every one is about ready to start back."

"They are all returning?" Pitamakan asked.

"Yes, the whole party."

"What about the watchers out on the hills — have they been called in?"

"Why, no, not that I know of; I guess no one thought of them."

"Then I will go call them at once," said Pitamakan; and he left me to finish roasting the elk ribs.

He soon returned, and we silently began eat-

ng. We had taken but a few bites of the crisp meat, however, when the party began calling: 'Pitamakan. Pitamakan. Come, hurry. We wait for you."

He went outside, then, a set of ribs in one hand, knife in the other, and stood before them deliberately cutting a mouthful of the meat.

"You need not wait for me; I am going on — not back," he announced.

His words astounded them. "Surely you do not mean that," some one cried.

"But my vision. It 's certain warning," Ancient Weasel exclaimed. "You go to your death if you do not heed it."

"Perhaps so, but I think not," Pitamakan answered. "I also had a dream last night. I met no other than a certain little water animal, my secret helper, and he encouraged me to go on."

"Oh, do turn back with us," one of his own Small Robe band entreated, a man whose daughter the Crows had captured. "You know how anxious we are to rescue our lost ones, but this is surely not the time to attempt it. Turn back with us. Let us make a fresh start, and

then, the gods favoring, you will lead us to success."

One after another, Bloods, and those of his own tribe, they begged him to change his mind and go home with them, but he remained firm in his decision, and finally they left us, some of them with shame for what they were doing, as could be plainly seen by the expression of their faces. During all the talk no one had appealed to me; it was a foregone conclusion that I would ever side with my friend and partner.

We passed the day on top of one of the near flat-topped buttes and kept a sharp lookout upon the surrounding country. For a long time in the morning the home-going party was in sight, the game fleeing from it herd after herd, but while we remained on the butte the buffalo and antelope to the south were quiet, and at dusk we returned to the grove, watered our horses, and gathered some pieces of dry wood for the evening fire. We had talked but little during the day except to deplore the turning-back of the party, and speculate as to the whereabouts of the two scouts, now absent from us eight days.

While roasting more meat over the little fire or our evening meal, Pitamakan again spoke f them. "I can't believe that Prairie Chicken Child and Striped Face have been killed by the nemy," he said. "Something tells me that they ill return to us."

We both made a grab for our guns, for we eard shots outside. Then came: "You are ight. They are here. Now, don't shoot your riends."

"Enter! Enter!" we cried, recognizing the oice, and thrusting aside the *pishamore* door urtain, I let the light shine out on the smiling aces of the very two that Pitamakan had just nentioned.

"What has happened here?" Prairie Chicken Child asked, as he and Striped Face came in nd sat down.

I told him all about Ancient Weasel's dream, nd the result, and Pitamakan added, "I suppose you, too, will also take the back trail."

"No. Not until we can go as victors," he eplied in a decided manner. "We have found he camp of the Mountain Crows after long

search along the Yellowstone and beyond it. They are right on the headwaters of the Musselshell, only two short night rides from here."

"That is good news," Pitamakan exclaimed. "What say you — shall we start for there tonight, or are you too tired?"

"We can stand it — and our horses, too. We came but a little way this evening."

"Let us go, then, as soon as you eat your fill of this good elk meat."

A half-hour later we mounted our horses and started out in a northwest direction across the plain.

Now, even when we were two hundred strong, I could not figure out how we were to rescue a lot of women and girls from a camp of more than a thousand fighting men. Much less did I see how just four of us were to do it; but I said nothing of my thoughts. Pitamakan, it was true, had never failed in any of his hazardous undertakings, but this he was now attempting, it seemed to me, was an utter impossibility.

CHAPTER X

AT daybreak the next morning we hid in a cottonwood grove on the Mussel-shell, or, as the Blackfeet call it, the ear, River. Twenty-four hours later we were the pine timber high up on a mountain-side verlooking the valley of a northern fork of ne river; four or five miles away, where the alley ended at the mouth of a deep cañon in ne foothills, hundreds of thin columns of smoke ere rising in the still air. With the glass we ould plainly see many of the lodges of the Iountain Crows, and many bands of horses eeding in the open bottom near them.

"Well, Pitamakan, there they are; there 's ne enemy's camp, and there are your Blackfoot omen and girls," said Prairie Chicken Child. Now, then, let's counsel together. What lan have you for rescuing them?"

"None, as yet. It is too soon to talk about . Let us first eat some of our dried elk meat

and have some sleep. Perhaps we will have a vision. Anyhow, I want to think for a time."

"I have been thinking all night about this," Prairie Chicken Child said. "And I have a good plan: At night I will go into the camp and wander round until I get a chance to tell one of the captives that we will be at a certain place on a certain night, she to tell all the others to meet us there, as soon as the lodge fires die out and the people sleep. Earlier, on that evening, we will take enough horses from the Crow herds to mount them all, and as soon as they join us we will ride for home as fast as we can go."

"Well, we will think about that," said Pitamakan, "but I tell you now that I don't believe your plan is good. Come. Let us eat, and then sleep."

A half-hour later I took the morning watch at the edge of the grove. The others stretched out on a soft bed of brown pine needles and began their much-needed rest. With the glass I looked at the camp from time to time, saw the horse herds driven in to water, and later

saw the men ride out on their daily round of hunting or trapping. They were great trappers, the Mountain Crows. Every spring they came down to our Fort Union post and sold us more beaver skins than we obtained from all the other tribes trading at our different posts. Their women, too, were noted as tanners of fine buffalo robes. Head part and all, they were always as soft as a blanket, and the flesh side white as snow.

While watching the camp and the country round, I turned Prairie Chicken Child's plan for rescuing the captives over in my mind; and the more I thought about it, the less I believed that it would do. The only way to get them, without great loss of life on our part, I concluded, would be for the whole force of the Blackfeet and Bloods to attack the camp. Even then we should surely lose many men, and the loss of life on the part of the Crows would be appalling. For the first time in my life it came to me how terrible was this constant warring of tribe against tribe. Better that those we sought to release should remain captives, I

thought, than that the two tribes should be practically wiped out in contention for them. I determined to try to make Pitamakan see the matter in that light as soon as he should awake.

At noon the three got up and joined me.

"No, Prairie Chicken Child, your plan will not work," Pitamakan began. "Even if the women all got the word to meet us at a certain place near camp, they could not possibly all do so: some would be unable to escape the watchfulness of their captors. But supposing they all did come. We might not be able to have horses there for them; and if we did, some of the animals would be so slow that the Crows would overtake us. And even if we should be able to take only fast ones, we have no saddles for the women, and they could not endure a long ride without them.

"Now, before Ancient Weasel's dream started him and our more than two hundred men hurrying homeward on the back trail, I had it all planned out how we were to get our women away from yonder camp, — but of that, no

matter. Here we are just four of us. Can we — just four against a thousand or more — return to their relatives those women and girls and children down there — and without great risk to ourselves? Brothers, I believe that we can. It came to me as I lay there half-asleep, that it can be easily done: we will capture three or four of the Crow hunters, take them home, then send one of them back to his people with word to their chiefs that they must deliver to us within one moon all the Blackfoot captives they hold, else we will put our prisoners to death."

"Wise one! Oh, you are wise!" Prairie Chicken Child exclaimed. "Always you find the one, the sure way to do things."

And I agreed with him. What I intended to say to Pitamakan instantly faded from my mind, for his was by far the better plan.

We remained where we were until late that night, then mounted our horses and rode straight down toward the Crow Camp. When the howling of the dogs apprised us that we were near it, Prairie Chicken Child left us to

forage for some food, and presently returned with a bundle of buffalo meat which he had stripped from the racks among the lodges.

"There will be some angry old wives in the morning when they discover their loss," he remarked, "and they will accuse their neighbors of taking it. Oh, how they will scold one another!"

After passing the camp we rode up a south fork of the river on a fairly good trail through the timber, and in a couple of hours came to a series of quaking aspen groves along the streamlet, a promising place for beavers, as they are especially fond of the bark of the trees. Here we rested, waiting for daylight to reveal the lay of the country, and enable us to secure a good position for our purpose. It came after what seemed to us a long wait; we found ourselves on a well-beaten trapping trail, and close to a number of beaver dams along the stream. It was no place for us to attempt the capture of one of the trappers, and we went on.

Shortly after sunrise we arrived at the forks of the little stream, and saw that the trail up

the left and smaller branch was used by not more than one man. We did not follow it, but went along the main trail a couple of hundred yards farther, and then, branching off one by one, and finally coming together, rode a sparsely timbered ridge overlooking this small branch. After going about a mile we looked down upon several small beaver ponds glistening in the bright sunshine, and hemmed in by a dense growth of still dark-leaved willows.

"Ha! There's the place for us," said Pitamakan, with a comprehensive wave of the hand. "There, brothers, is where we trap—"

With a cheerful grin he finished the sentence by imitating with both arms the flapping of a bird's wings; the sign for the Crow tribes.

Our first move was to tie the horses on the far side of the ridge from the streamlet, so that they could neither see, nor hear, nor scent any of their kind passing along the trail. This done, we retraced our way over the top of the ridge, and went down it almost to the beaver ponds, where we again struck the trapper's horse trail. Following it for a hundred yards or so brought

us to its end. There the tramped leaves and earth and the nipped ends of the willow shoots showed that the Crow always left his horse, and went on afoot through the thick brush and swampy ground to his traps in the ponds. It was the very place for our purpose; an almost impenetrable wall of willows hedged it in; the trapper had for some distance forced his horse to break down a path as it advanced, and only when the animal could go no farther had he left it.

"Brother, the gods surely guide your steps," Prairie Chicken Child said, looking at Pitamakan. "Yes, they are ever with you. From this day you have but to call me and *I* will follow you anywhere."

"Well, then, follow me now," Pitamakan answered, after a long look round. And getting down on hands and knees he led the way into the thick mat of willows on the outside of the tethering place of the trapper's horse. But he did not go far before turning and wriggling back to within four feet of the spot where the animal always stood. A few minutes later we were all comfortably settled in a row, lying

flat on the ground. In front of us we had reinforced our screen of willows by the addition of several armfuls of quickly gathered willow branches; and so cunningly were they interwoven with the natural growth that no mortal eye could detect the sham.

"Now, then, just a few last words, and then we will lie still, and wait and listen," said Pitamakan. "If our enemy comes we will try to take him before he can even raise gun or draw knife to defend himself. Just watch me, and when I nod my head—so, jump up and out with me, and grab hold of the man wherever you can. Do not take your guns—they will only be in the way. But you, my white brother, as you are the least strong of any of us, and a sure shot, you take your gun, and if you see that the enemy is about to use his weapon, knife, or gun, or whatever, then use yours, and use it quick."

"I think it would be well for me to carry my gun, and use it as a club. A rap on the enemy's head with it would at once put him in our power," Prairie Chicken Child suggested.

"Ha! We know what one of your raps would be," Pitamakan answered, with a grim smile. "We are not here, brother, to get dead men to exchange for our women."

At that Prairie Chicken Child laughed loud. "Well, perhaps I would strike hard," he acknowledged, "one has to; a Crow's head is almost as solid as a piece of wood."

After that we lay quiet, and soon three of us went to sleep, Pitamakan taking the watch. I had done more than my share of that duty and so slept soundly, yet a slight touch awakened me. Without stirring a fraction of an inch in response to it, except to raise my head, slowly, cautiously, I noted, first, that the sun was marking noon, and then that my companions were eagerly trying to look down the trail through the closely woven willow screen, and listening with open mouth for— Oh, yes: the trapper, of course.

I heard the occasional cracking of a stick, and nearer and nearer, louder and louder, the thumping tread of a heavy animal's feet, the swishing of brush, and then through the small

apertures in the screen I saw the upper portion of the body of a large black horse, and astride it a remarkably big, strong, pleasant-looking man. Excited as I was, I even noted that the two long, smooth, lustrous black braids of his hair were as thick as my wrist; that his scalp-locks hanging in front of the ears were tip wound with otter fur; that the buffalo robe toga he wore, flesh side out, was covered with red, yellow, green, and black pictographs of his *coups;* and from that I judged that he was a famous warrior.

Just as we expected, he dismounted right in front of us, and, with gun held in the hollow of his left arm to permit the use of both hands, released the two half-hitches of his lariat bridle from the horse's jaw, then tethered the animal to the brush so that it could eat. All this I saw with one eye, so to speak, while I kept the other on Pitamakan, watching for the signal he was to give us; but he remained as motionless as a rock. The Crow, having cared for his horse, turned his back to us and pushed his way through the dense brush toward the beaver ponds.

When we could no longer hear him, Prairie Chicken Child expelled a long, deep breath, and exclaimed: "Oh, my brothers! If we can only capture him! He is no other than Short Bow, head chief of these Mountain Crows."

"Oh, oh! So that is Short Bow himself!" Pitamakan almost gasped, in pleased surprise. "We must have him. With one other to take back our message, he will be prisoner enough."

"He knows not fear; his strength is that of ten men," said Prairie Chicken Child; and added in a lower voice: "The only way we will get him will be by bullet from the Fox's gun."

At that a creepy feeling went all up and down my back. I did n't want to kill that big, fine-looking man; the very thought of it sickened me. Pitamakan, however, somewhat relieved my feelings by saying in his ever confident manner: "Don't worry, brother, you will not have to shoot him."

And then he quickly crept back, circled round, moved the Crow's horse forward into

the unbroken brush, and settled the slack of the lariat over a bush as if the animal had of its own accord moved on to fresh browsing, and there entangled itself.

"There. That gives us clear space for our rush," he explained upon returning to us, and then we lay quiet, waiting for the Crow's return.

He was gone a long time; our excitement and suspense had become almost unbearable when we finally heard him forcing his way through the brush. He came into the trail in front of us, glanced at his horse, and then dropped two beavers to the ground. Next, he set his gun up against the brush, and then sat down back to us, to put on his leggins and moccasins, having removed them probably to keep them dry while he was wading the ponds and tending his traps. This was our chance. Pitamakan nodded his head, and an instant later he and the two Bloods, each with one tremendous, brush-clearing leap, literally fell upon the unsuspecting man, while I ran round in front of them with cocked rifle.

Never did I hear such a weird, all-powerful roar from human throat as the Crow let out when overborne and thrown flat to the ground. Then, with one of the Bloods hanging to each arm, and with Pitamakan on his back and a strangle hold round his neck, he rose and began a mighty struggle to get free from them. It was not a white man's fight of fists and knock-out blows. There was no striking: in place of that there ensued such a whirl of legs and arms, of pulling and pushing, the four of them now rolling on the ground, and again whirling this way and that way on their feet, that one combatant was hardly distinguishable from another. Once the Crow managed to free both arms, but Pitamakan still clung to his back, and the Bloods regained their hold upon them, and once more tried to jerk him forward to the ground. Then it was that I saw my chance to help, and running round behind and dropping my rifle, I suddenly grasped the Crow's ankles and jerked back with all my strength; his feet flew out from under him and down he went with a tremendous thud.

"My lariat! I dropped it when we sprang from the brush," Pitamakan shouted to me.

It lay almost at my feet; I picked it up and thrust it into his hands. Deftly and surely he pinioned the man's hands behind his back with it, and then the others turned him over and forced him into a sitting position. Gasping for breath, his perspiring face smeared with earth, he glared at us with unblinking, furiously flaming eyes. And at Prairie Chicken Child he looked longest, most hatefully, but uttered not a word of his thoughts, of his consuming rage.

It was then that Prairie Chicken Child laughed — and what a cruel laugh it was! He addressed the chief in his own language.

But Pitamakan interrupted him. "Now, brother, don't speak bad words," he said, "but just tell him that the treatment he will receive from us will depend upon his own actions."

Somewhat disappointed, the Blood did as he was told. And still the Crow remained silent, glowering at us as before.

Pitamakan looked up at the sun. "It may be that we can capture another trapper to-day,"

he said. "Anyhow, let us try it. But first we will get this one up to where our horses are picketed."

When the Crow's horse was brought out, he refused to mount it. He sprang to his feet instead, and with hands still fast tied charged Prairie Chicken Child and knocked him over. He then attempted to get away from us by running. Pitamakan and I, however, caught the end of the lariat binding his hands and with a quick jerk brought him to the ground.

"Now, you listen." Pitamakan addressed him through Prairie Chicken Child. "Either you will do as we say, or we will tie your feet also, and lash you across the back of that horse just as we would so much buffalo meat. You see that you can't get away from us. Neither can you make us kill you; we are going to take you alive to the Blackfoot camp — maybe badly bruised and rope-chafed, but still alive. Now, you get on that horse!"

And, to our surprise, the Crow obeyed.

Upon returning to our horses we tied the chief to a tree and left Striped Face to guard

him while we went back to watch the main trapping trail. A close examination of it proved that three horsemen had passed up, and two down it, so we lay low for the third. We selected a place where the trail passed close by the huge, earth-clogged, upturned roots of a fallen pine. Pitamakan and I hugged close this shelter, and on the opposite side of the trail Prairie Chicken Child stood against the trunk of a big tree, free-handed to grapple the rider.

We soon heard him coming, and stood ready. The instant his horse's head showed clear of roots and tree, my companions flung themselves out and up, one fastening to his neck, the other grasping him round the waist. At the same time the horse made a forward leap, and dropped them all in a pile.

"*Hai-ya!* This time it is Young Bull we have," said our Crow-raised companion. "A little thin man, as you see, brothers, but, oh, a heavy counter of *coups* for all that. And tricky! He is making no struggle, you see, but we have got to watch him closely."

The Crow spoke a few words in his own

language. "He wants to know the meaning of this," Prairie Chicken Child interpreted.

"Well, tell him nothing at present," Pitamakan answered, "except to stand up and have his hands tied, and then get on his horse."

The man obeyed without another word, but his quick, bright, shifty eyes took in our every move, and betrayed his hope that in some way he would manage to escape from us.

It was laughable to see the new captive's astonishment when we brought him face to face with his erstwhile proud chief, now ignominiously lashed to a tree. But he never uttered one word, nor did Short Bow speak a word to him.

Traveling only by night, closely guarding our prisoners both night and day, we had a wearing and anxious trip back to the Judith and the Blackfoot camp. On the morning of the third day, just at sunrise, we looked down from the divide between Warm Spring and the river, and saw the lodges, and the smoke rising from them in hundreds of pencil-like columns. Then it was that Short Bow asked in a far from

peremptory manner what was our purpose with him. Very briefly but clearly Pitamakan explained it, Prairie Chicken Child doing the interpreting, as usual. When he had finished, the Crow cried out piteously: "Either kill me here or allow me to go into your camp as a chief should, free-handed and with gun across the saddle."

"As you love your children, will you promise me neither to attempt to escape nor harm yourself if I agree to that?" Pitamakan asked.

"I promise," the man solemnly answered; and by his manner we felt certain that he would keep his word.

"And you?" Pitamakan asked of the other Crow.

But Prairie Chicken Child with a negative wave of the hand refused to interpret that. "I know him," he said; "he will swear by his children and all the gods, and then break his word. Leave him fast tied to his horse."

So it was settled. And then, while they waited there on the divide, Pitamakan sent me in ahead to apprise Big Lake of our com-

ing and to assemble the Braves to protect our captives. There was no telling what some of the young men might do to them if not held back until they knew our purpose.

The moment I entered camp a crowd began to gather round me, and although I kept calling out, "We are all safe. The others will soon be here," the crush became so great that I made my way with difficulty to Big Lake's lodge, and from there to that of Fox Eyes, chief of our Braves Society. What I told the chiefs was quickly repeated, and within five minutes was made known to all, from the lower end of the Blackfoot to the upper end of the adjoining Blood camp.

A half-hour later, escorted by the Braves Societies of both tribes, we approached the Blackfoot lodges with our Crows, Short Bow now carrying his gun and riding by Pitamakan's side. And never, before nor since, have I witnessed such an ovation as was then accorded us, and Pitamakan especially. The welcoming roar of the crowd shouting our names could, I doubt not, have been heard five miles

away. The women wildly pressed their little ones up against Pitamakan in order that they might be instilled with some of his "medicine," or sacred power. It was a long time before I was able to break away from the crowd and accompany José to our own lodge. And not once did I leave it that day, although called to many a feast. I was completely tired out.

That evening Young Bull was given a fresh horse and sent to his people with our terms for the release of their chief. The ultimatum was that unless they delivered to us within one moon all the Blackfoot captives they held, they would never again see Short Bow. He, in the mean while, and at his own request, went to live with Pitamakan. The two became real friends, talking together by the hour in the sign language when Prairie Chicken Child was not present to interpret for them. Later, they held long conferences with Big Lake and the other chiefs of both camps. At these it was decided that the Crows, on the one hand, and the Blackfeet and Bloods on the other, should meet at Arrow Creek in the green-grass moon

of spring, and there enter into a treaty of peace. I may as well say here that this was done, and that not two weeks later the compact was broken by a party of reckless young Crows, who stole a large herd of Blackfoot horses and killed two of the pursuing Blackfeet.

Ten days from the time he was released, Young Bull, with an escort of a dozen Crows, rode into our camp with every one of the Blackfoot women, girls, and children that his people had taken captive. Then there was another wild outburst of rejoicing, and much feasting of the Crow visitors, who remained several days with us. I must here record that three of the Blackfoot girls refused to stay with their people, they each having during their captivity married of their own will a young Crow, "for better or for worse." Each of the young men brought presents of finery and many horses for the parents of their brides, who accepted them and thus ratified the marriages.

The day after the departure of the Crows, Pitamakan and I were called to a feast in Big Lake's lodge. As we followed the messenger

thither we little thought what a surprise there was in store for us. Every chief of the different bands of the Blackfeet was there when we entered, but for all that seat spaces on either side of Big Lake remained vacant and we were motioned to take them, Pitamakan the one on his right, I the other. We were no sooner seated than the big pipe was filled and handed to old Red Eagle to light, which he did after a short prayer. While it was passed from hand to hand I noticed that the guests were unusually silent, and that every face wore an expression of expectancy; something unusual was undoubtedly afoot.

After the pipe was smoked out, the women of the lodge placed food before us, and still there was constrained silence on the part of the guests, who, for the most part, ate only a few mouthfuls, and pushed the dish from them. Then, when the pipe was once more filled and going the rounds, Big Lake looked at Bull Turns Around and said, significantly: "*Kyi! Ĭt-sĭn-ĭ-kos, ki-tûk-a-ăn-on.*" (Now! Tell him, your friend and ours.)

Then said the chief: "*Kyi!* Pitamakan. You are young, but, although your winters are few, you are old, as old as any of us in experience; you have even traveled longer trails, fought more peoples, and done more for our tribe than most of us. In return for all this we wish to do something for you, we of the Small Robes — your own band — especially. Well, the thought came to me what that something should be. I counseled with the others and they were all pleased, all agreed that what I proposed should come to pass upon your return from the Crow country. And what a return that was! How you have gladdened the hearts of the mourners! So it is that I say: 'Ho! Pitamakan, chief of the Small Robe band.'"

"Oh, no! No!" Pitamakan cried, raising his hands as if to ward off a blow. "I am too young. I am not fit for such a place as that."

"You are!" "You are!" "Yes, you are!" cried the guests, I as loud as any of them; and then, after a moment of intense silence in the lodge Bull Turns Around spoke once more: "What we here order you to do, that you must

do," he said. "I only wish that your father could be here this day to know how we regard his son."

At that Pitamakan bowed his head and tears rolled down his cheeks as he faltered: "I take your order. I will do the best I can for our band and for our tribe."

So my friend and partner became a chief. A "Boy Chief," as he was frequently called, but as José and I then predicted, he was destined to occupy a far higher position than that of chief of the Small Robe band.

THE END

HECKMAN BINDERY
BOUND TO
JUL 8 1941
PLEASE
N. MANCHESTER, IND.